

Paul's Letter to the Galatians



Events Associated With Paul's Letter to the Galatians, Written From Corinth During the Third Missionary Tour, c. A.D. 58

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the GALATIANS **INTRODUCTION**

1. Title. This letter was addressed to the churches of Galatia. It is not known whether these were in Northern Galatia, in such cities as Tavium, Pessinus, and Ancyra (the modern Ankara) or in Southern Galatia, at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and other cities (see The Journeys of Paul). The former view is called the North Galatian theory, and the latter the South Galatian theory. For a discussion of these two theories see Additional Note on Acts 16. The name Galatia is derived from certain Gallic tribes who invaded Asia Minor about 278 B.C. and settled in the northern part of what became, in 25 B.C., the Roman province of Galatia.

2. Authorship. The Pauline authorship of this epistle has not been seriously challenged. The internal evidence of the epistle itself is convincing. In its entirety it is consistent with the character of Paul as portrayed in the Acts and in other letters attributed to him. Postapostolic Christian writers were acquainted with the epistle and considered that it came from his hand. It appears in the earliest lists of NT books.

3. Historical Setting. On their first journey, about A.D. 45–47, Paul and Barnabas founded the churches of Antioch (in Pisidia), Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe (see Acts 13:14 to 14:23). After their return to Antioch they were sent to Jerusalem with the question as to whether Gentile converts to Christianity should be required to practice the rites and

ceremonies of Judaism (see Acts 15). The Jerusalem Council, which was convened about A.D. 49, decided against making this requirement of non-Jews. Soon after the council Paul began his Second Missionary Journey, accompanied by Silas. They first revisited the churches of Southern Galatia which Paul had organized on his first journey, three of the four being specifically mentioned—Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium (see Acts 16:1–5). They next carried the gospel to Phrygia and Galatia (see v. 6). Those who hold the North Galatian theory (see Additional Note on Acts 16) note that it was *after* this visit to Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium that Paul and Silas went through what Luke speaks of as Galatia. From this it may be inferred that Luke is thinking of the region settled by the Gauls rather than of the Roman province of Galatia, which included other areas to the south (see The Journeys of Paul). Paul returned once more to Galatia early on his Third Missionary Journey, about A.D. 53 and 54.

Obviously the Epistle to the Galatians must have been written after the events recorded in Gal. 2:1–14. If the council at Jerusalem described in Acts 15 is here alluded to, the letter must have been written after the close of the first journey, for that council was held between the first and second journeys (see Acts 15:36–41). Furthermore, according to Gal. 4:13, it seems that Paul had already visited the churches of Galatia twice, and if so the letter must have been written after the close of his second journey. If the North Galatian theory is accepted, the letter to the Galatians must have been written after the third journey, for Paul had not visited the North Galatian churches on his first journey. Accordingly the time of writing could be the winter of A.D. 57/58.

One argument advanced in favor of Corinth as the place of writing is the close resemblance in subject matter between this epistle and that to the Romans, which was written during Paul's third visit to Corinth. Justification by faith is the theme of both epistles, and both deal at length with the distinction between "the law" and the gospel.

If the South Galatian theory is accepted, a date as early as A.D. 45 is possible. Some think it may have been written even before the Jerusalem Council, immediately upon Paul's return to Antioch from his first journey. The reason given for this conclusion is that the epistle contains no specific mention of the council or of the decision there agreed upon. To the objection that Paul had already visited the South Galatian churches twice, those who hold the South Galatian theory reply that his return to them on the first journey is to be considered a second visit (see Acts 14:21–23).

The purpose of the letter is evident from its contents. Apostasy is threatening, if not already begun, and as a result the letter is naturally controversial. The apostasy came as the result of the activities of Judaizing teachers, possibly of the same group that stirred up trouble in the church at Antioch in Syria over the same question (see Acts 15:1). It was the discord caused by these men at Antioch that precipitated the council at Jerusalem. At that council Paul was again opposed by the Judaizers, who contended that Christian converts must observe Jewish legal requirements. They demanded the circumcision of Titus (see Gal. 2:3, 4). In this epistle Paul is not so much concerned with circumcision or any other feature of the ceremonial law, in particular, as he is with the false teaching that man may save himself by observing the requirements of "the law." This is evident from the fact that Paul, on occasion, had participated in some of the ritual procedures (Acts 18:18; 21:20–27). He also had Timothy circumcised (Acts 16:3).

These false teachers had apparently met with great success in their efforts, and seem to have deceived a large segment of the membership in the churches of Galatia by their

teachings (see Gal. 1:6). It is not clear how far the deceived churches had gone in the actual practice of legalism before they received Paul's epistle, but it is evident from the general tone of the letter that there was imminent danger of a general apostasy. These teachers were working in direct opposition to the decision of the council. They not only repudiated Paul's gospel but challenged his authority as an apostle. They made much of the fact that Paul was not one of the Twelve chosen and ordained by Christ.

In order to make clear to the Galatians the error into which they had fallen, Paul restated the great principles of the gospel as he had expounded it to them. But since they charged Paul with preaching a false gospel, and since this involved their further claim that he was not qualified to teach, Paul felt compelled to present evidence that would vindicate his apostleship. This accounts for the autobiographical portion of the letter (chs. 1:11 to 2:14). His purpose in giving so detailed an account of personal experiences related to the problem was to prove the validity of his gospel. He also stressed the fact that his teachings, which he explained to the apostles at the council, were in harmony with those of the leaders who had been associated with Jesus and had received their message from Him.

4. Theme. The theme of the Epistle to the Galatians is righteousness attained by faith in Jesus Christ. This is set in contrast with the Jewish concept of righteousness attained by compliance with the "works" prescribed by the Jewish legal system. This letter exalts what God has done through Christ for man's salvation and summarily dismisses the idea that man can be justified by his own merits. It extols the free gift of God in contrast with man's attempts to save himself.

The specific question at issue between Paul and the heretical teachers in Galatia was, Does compliance with the prescribed forms and requirements of Judaism entitle a man to divine favor and acceptance? The categorical answer was No, "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ" (see on ch. 2:16). Indeed, the Christian who attempts to earn salvation by the "works of the law" thereby forfeits the grace of Christ (chs. 2:21; 5:4).

As "the children of promise" (ch. 4:28) Christians are "heirs" (ch. 3:6, 7, 14, 29). Having become new creatures in Christ (chs. 4:7; 6:15), "led of the Spirit" (ch. 5:18), and with Christ abiding in their hearts by faith, and God's moral law written therein (Gal. 2:20; Heb. 8:10), they are no longer, like immature children, in need of a "schoolmaster" to guide them (Gal. 3:23-26; 4:1-7). Whereas the Jews boasted of righteousness they supposed they earned by their own efforts to keep God's laws (Rom. 2:17; 9:4), Christians acknowledge that they have nothing whatever of which to boast except the saving power of "the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ" (see Gal. 6:14).

The term "law" in Galatians stands for the entire revelation, at Sinai, of God's rules for His children—moral laws, civil statutes, and ceremonial ritual. To these the Jews later added a ponderous array of man-made laws. They mistakenly thought that by their own strength they could give perfect obedience to these laws, and that by such obedience they could earn their own salvation. Galatians is concerned, not so much with any of these laws as such, but with the erroneous idea that a man can earn his own salvation by rigorous adherence to various legal requirements. The issue is one of salvation by faith versus salvation by works.

Paul explains that the gospel promises were confirmed to Abraham in the covenant, and that the revelation of God's law 430 years later did not alter the provisions of that

covenant (ch. 3:6–9, 14–18). “The law” was not designed to replace the covenant or to provide another means of salvation, but to help men understand and appropriate the covenant’s provisions of divine grace. “The law” was not intended to be an end in itself, as the Jews came to think, but a means—a “schoolmaster”—to lead men to salvation in Christ according to the promises of the covenant. The purpose of “the law,” its “end,” or objective, was to lead men to Christ (see on Rom. 10:4), not to open for them another pathway to salvation. For the most part, however, the Jews willingly remained in ignorance of God’s plan for making men righteous by faith in Christ, and went about to establish their own righteousness by “the works of the law” (Gal. 2:16; see Rom. 10:3).

Paul explains further that the covenant with Abraham provided for the salvation of the Gentiles, whereas “the law” did not do so; and that Gentiles are therefore to find salvation through faith in the promise made to Abraham, not through “the law” (Gal. 3:8, 9, 14, 27–29). The error and grave problem introduced into the Galatian churches by the Judaizers consisted of attempts to impose upon Gentile converts ceremonial forms, such as circumcision and the ritual observance of “days, and months, and times, and years” (chs. 4:10; 5:2). That specific problem no longer exists, for Christians today are in no danger of reverting to the ritual requirements of Judaism (cf. chs. 4:9; 5:1). This is not to say, however, that the book of Galatians is only of historical interest and without instructional value for modern Christians. Inclusion of the epistle in the Sacred Canon makes certain that it has lessons of value and importance for our day (cf. Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:11; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

As already noted (see p. 933), the word “law” in the book of Galatians includes within its purview both the moral and the ceremonial law; in fact, the ceremonial law would have been meaningless without the moral law (see on ch. 2:16). The ceremonial law expired by limitation at the cross (see on Col. 2:14–17), but the moral law—the Decalogue—remains in full force (see on Matt. 5:17, 18). There is danger today of adhering to the “letter” of the Decalogue without entering into its spirit (Matt. 19:16–22; see on Gal. 5:17–22), as there was in Paul’s day of participating in the sacrificial system without realizing that its symbols pointed to Christ. To whatever extent, therefore, modern Christians fall into the error of attempting to save themselves by their human endeavors to keep the Decalogue, they fall from grace and become “entangled” in “the yoke of bondage” (Gal. 5:1, 4). For all such, Christ died in vain (ch. 2:21). The warning of the book of Galatians applies to them. The Christian keeps the Decalogue, not to gain salvation, but because he is saved. Indeed only a saved man can keep it, for Christ dwells within him.

That warning applies also to those who think to attain to a higher level of righteousness before God by meticulous adherence to man-made regulations regarding standards of Christian living, such as dress and diet. Thus they make the same mistake as the Jews of Christ’s day (see Rom. 14:17; see on Mark 7:1–14). Others pay tithe, attend church, even observe the Sabbath, under the delusion that they thereby earn merit in the sight of God. True, the Christian will faithfully abide by all divine requirements. But he will do so, not in the hope of earning favor in the sight of God, but because, as a son of God by faith in the saving grace of Jesus Christ, it is supreme joy and happiness to order his life in harmony with the expressed will of God (see on Matt. 7:21–27; see EGW Supplementary Material on Gal. 3:24).

The pre-eminent lesson of the book of Galatians for the church today is the same as it was in the days of Paul—that salvation can be obtained in no other way than by simple faith in the merits of Christ (chs. 2:16; 3:2; 5:1), and that nothing a man may do can in the least degree enhance his standing before God or increase his chances of obtaining forgiveness and redemption. Law, whether moral or ceremonial, has no power to set men free from the state of sin in which they find themselves (see on Rom. 3:20 7:7). This is Paul’s “gospel,” in contrast with the perverted “gospel” of the Judaizers (Gal. 1:6–12; 2:2, 5, 7, 14).

The letter concludes with an appeal not to abuse the new-found liberty of the gospel, but to live a holy life (ch. 6). Christian love should lead the Galatians to guard against a sanctimonious spirit, and to deal kindly with those who fall into error. The church should be known for its good works—the fruitage of the Spirit—but should not attempt to make good works a substitute for faith in the saving merits of Jesus Christ.

5. Outline.

- I. Salutation and Introduction, 1:1–10.
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 - B. The occasion for, and purpose of, the letter, 1:6–10.
- II. A Defense of Paul’s Apostolic Authority, 1:11 to 2:14.
 - A. The genuineness of his conversion to Christianity, 1:11–24.
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 2. His former zeal for the Jewish faith, 1:13, 14.
 3. His conversion and his mission to the heathen, 1:15, 16.
 4. His preparatory retirement to Arabia, 1:17.
 5. His first contact with the apostles at Jerusalem, 1:18–20.
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- III. Faith Versus Legalism as the Means of Salvation, 2:15 to 3:29.
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- IV. Christian Freedom From the Tutorship of “the Law,” 4:1–31.
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- B. The foolish course of the church in Galatia, 4:8–31.
 - 1. The folly of Judaizing, 4:8–12.
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 - 3. The allegory of the two sons, 4:21–31.
- V. Moral and Spiritual Exhortations, 5:1 to 6:10.
 - A. The bondage of legalism incompatible with freedom in Christ, 5:1–12.
 - B. Christian liberty not an excuse for license, 5:13–26.
 - 1. Love is the fulfilling of the law, 5:13–18.
 - 2. The works of the flesh and the works of the Spirit, 5:19–26.
 - C. Brotherly love fulfills the law of Christ, 6:1–10.
- VI. Conclusion, 6:11–18.

CHAPTER 1

6 *He wondereth that they have so soon left him and the gospel*, 8 *and accurseth those that preach any other gospel than he did*. 11 *He learned the gospel not of men, but of God*: 14 *and sheweth what he was before his calling*, 17 *and what he did presently after it*.

1. An apostle. See on Rom. 1:1. Paul customarily speaks of himself as an apostle without attempting to justify his claim to the title. Here, however, the extended defense of his apostleship (Gal. 1:1 to 2:14) indicates that the churches addressed were doubtful of accepting him for what he claimed to be. His gospel is of divine origin (ch. 1:6–10). He was genuinely converted (vs. 12–18) and was received into fellowship by the Judean churches (vs. 19–24). His stand on circumcision was approved by the leaders at Jerusalem (ch. 2:1–6). His commission as apostle to the Gentiles was acknowledged by them (vs. 7–10). His authority as an apostle was equal to that of the Twelve.

Not of men. His opponents apparently denied his claim to apostolic authority on the basis that he had not been appointed and commissioned by the Twelve. This he freely admits, but in the same breath lays claim to an even higher ordination.

By Jesus Christ. Like the Twelve, he had received his commission directly from Christ. The role of Ananias was strictly secondary (see Acts 9:17–20). For comment on the titles “Jesus” and “Christ” see on Matt. 1:1.

From the dead. Paul's authority as an apostle had come from the risen Christ. Reference to the resurrection of Christ from the dead in the salutation of an epistle is peculiar to the letter to the Galatians. Apparently the false brethren from Judea now leading the Galatian believers astray challenged the validity of Paul's apostleship on the basis that he had not had the privilege of personal association with Christ as had the Twelve, and had not received his call at the time they had been set apart. From this obvious fact they concluded that he was inferior to the Twelve and implied that, since he had not been formally selected and commissioned by them, he was an impostor and his gospel unreliable.

2. The brethren. It was usual for Paul to include the names of his companions in the salutations of his epistles. Thus in 1 Cor. 1:1 he mentions Sosthenes and in Phil. 1:1, Timothy. In view of the possibility that this epistle and that to the Romans were written about the same time, from Corinth, those mentioned in Rom. 16:21–23 may here be referred to.

The churches of Galatia. See p. 931. The salutation to this letter stands in marked contrast with nearly all the others Paul wrote. There is no expression of personal affection, such as “beloved” in Rom. 1:7, or of confidence in their loyalty to the truth, as

in 1 Thess. 1:3. There is no expression of appreciation for faithfulness or Christian service. He does not even refer to the Galatians as “saints.” Perhaps this reflects the extent of their apostasy—Paul could find nothing for which to commend them.

3. *Grace ... and peace.* The customary salutation in nearly all of Paul’s epistles (see on Rom. 1:7; 1 Cor. 1:3). However Paul may feel about the defection of the Galatians, he does not love them less. His sincere desire for them is that they may receive the grace that comes to man from God as a gift through faith in Jesus Christ. Paul’s burden in this letter is to impress again upon them the great truth that righteousness comes from God as a favor (see p. 933). It can never be earned by works, but comes only through belief in the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Received by the sinner, this grace brings peace (see on Rom. 5:1; cf. Phil. 4:7).

4. *Gave himself.* See on Matt. 20:28; Rom. 4:25. The theme of this epistle is salvation through Jesus Christ. The Galatians had turned away from this spiritual truth and had accepted the false teaching that salvation may be earned. Acceptance of this unscriptural doctrine had practically led them to ignore the atoning death of Christ. In giving Himself to release us from the penalty of sin, Jesus not only offered Himself as a sacrifice for man, to suffer and die in his behalf, but united Himself with the human family and identified its interests with His own (see on Phil. 2:6–8).

For our sins. See on Isa. 53:4–6.

This present evil world. That is, from the prevailing sin and corruption of the present age. Of ourselves we are powerless to escape (see on Rom. 7:24 to 8:4). To the Galatians, who had so soon forgotten the great truths of justification and sanctification and had returned to the works of the law as a means of salvation, Paul again presents the great truth that Jesus, through His atoning sacrifice, has provided a way of escape for all who will accept Him. Any attempt to earn this victory over the evil of the world through one’s own efforts is not according to God’s will. Thus, in his brief introduction, Paul intimates his objective in writing. If the Galatians persist in their legalism, they can hope neither for deliverance from sin now nor for admission to the future, sinless world.

According to the will. See on Isa. 53:10; cf. John 3:16.

God and our Father. Literally, “our God and Father.” Both terms refer to the same person.

5. *To whom be glory.* The thought of God’s great gift of love inspires the apostle to break forth in an ascription of praise. Throughout eternity the redeemed will sing praises to Him, who, by so great a sacrifice, made possible their eternal salvation. For the word “glory” see on Rom. 3:23.

Amen. See on Matt. 5:18.

6. *I marvel.* This is the only instance in all of his letters to churches where Paul does not express thankfulness and joy. Instead there is an expression of profound astonishment. How could the Galatians so quickly forget the truths of the gospel and all the evidences of God’s call, which once meant so much to them, in favor of the false teachers, who contradicted all that Paul had taught them? Not long before this they had gladly accepted Christ as their substitute and were rejoicing in freedom from sin, through faith. Now they are attempting to atone for their sins through the works of the law. They are, in fact, denying the validity of their own former experience.

So soon. Probably, “so soon” after conversion, but possibly after they had heard “another gospel.”

Removed. Gr. *metatithēmi*, “to transfer,” “to desert.” The verb here is in the present tense, indicating that the apostasy was still in process of development as Paul wrote. This departure from the faith has come suddenly and is progressing rapidly. The form of the verb also implies that they were responsible for deserting Paul. Others had influenced them, but they had willingly responded to that influence. This, of course, does not absolve the false teachers themselves from guilt.

Him that called. Commentators differ as to whether this refers to God, to Christ, or to Paul. However, Paul always designates God the Father as the one issuing the gospel call (see Rom. 8:30; 9:11; 1 Cor. 1:9; etc.). Nevertheless it was through Paul that God had made His gracious call to the Galatians (cf. 2 Cor. 5:18–20).

Another gospel. That is, another (*heteros*) of a different kind (see on 2 Cor. 11:4). The “gospel” of the false teachers was not a variation of Paul’s gospel, but something altogether different. In fact, it was not a gospel at all (see Gal. 1:7). There is no other good news than that of salvation through Jesus Christ (see Acts 4:12). Paul was preaching that men are saved by faith, apart from the works of the law. Any attempt to superimpose works on faith as a means of salvation is a perversion of the gospel, because it denies both the necessity and the efficacy of Christ’s sacrifice. For comment on the word “gospel” see on Mark 1:1. For comment on attempts to blend Judaism and Christianity see pp. 53, 54.

7. Not another. What these Judaizers preach is not the “gospel” at all, but a perversion, or counterfeit, of the gospel.

There be some. Paul does not even deign to call the Judaizers by name, but implies that they are only private individuals who represent no one but themselves and who are bent solely on the pursuit of their own interests.

Trouble. Gr. *tarassō*, “to agitate,” “to trouble,” “to perplex” the mind with respect to something, here, by suggesting doubts and scruples concerning the validity of the gospel as proclaimed by Paul.

8. We. Evidently Paul, and possibly his associates mentioned in v. 2. Paul commonly uses the first person plural pronoun when referring to himself alone.

Angel from heaven. Paul could scarcely make a stronger affirmation of certainty with respect to the gospel as he had presented it. It was incredible that an angel from heaven should lead men astray.

Than that. Or, “contrary to.” “Any other gospel,” that is, a gospel of a different kind, would be contrary to the true gospel. God does not change, nor does He contradict Himself.

Accursed. Gr. *anathema*, “a cursed thing,” that is, devoted to vengeance, here, the vengeance of God. In the LXX *anathema* is used for the Hebrew noun *cherem*, related to the verb *charam*, and meaning a person or thing consigned to destruction (see on 1 Sam. 15:3). Spiritually it denotes the state of one who is alienated from God by sin. As used in the NT it does not refer to ecclesiastical excommunication as practiced in later centuries, but no doubt did include some form of separation from the church. In the case of the immoral man of the Corinthian church, Paul had advised that he be removed from the church (1 Cor. 5:2).

9. As we said. Evidently on a previous visit Paul had warned the Galatians against false teachers who would attempt to pervert the gospel (cf. Acts 20:29, 30). That former warning should have protected them against such impostors.

So say I now. The change from “we” to “I” probably reflects an effort to lend his personal authority as an apostle to the statement he is about to repeat.

Accursed. See on v. 8.

10. Persuade men. That is, to please them and so win their favor. Compare Matt. 28:14. Certainly what Paul has just said about the Galatians themselves and about how to deal with those who oppose the gospel (Gal. 1:6–9) cannot be construed as an attempt to win the favor of men. Only God would be pleased with so positive an exposure of error. Perhaps this question was an answer to a charge brought against him by false teachers, to the effect that he had won the favor of the Galatians by flattery and subterfuge.

Servant of Christ. As a servant of Christ, Paul must do all he can to save men, not to please them. Should he seek to “please men,” irrespective of his obligation as a preacher of the gospel, he would not be true to his calling as a servant of Christ. It was impossible even to think of making such a compromise. He had, it is true, become “all things to all men” in order to save some (1 Cor. 9:22), but in doing so he never compromised his loyalty to truth. He is anxious above all else to save men, and to this end he will gladly sacrifice even life itself.

11. I certify you. Paul solemnly announces the subject to which chs. 1:11 to 2:21 in particular are devoted.

Not after man. The point at issue is Paul’s authority as an apostle, and thus the validity of his “gospel”—of salvation by faith instead of by the “works of the law.” He devotes much space to a detailed account of certain incidents from the time of his conversion to the council at Jerusalem, at which the apostles formally acknowledged his call to the gospel ministry. This was necessary because of the insistent claim of the Judaizing teachers that because Paul was not one of the Twelve, therefore his gospel was not apostolic and consequently not genuine. In vs. 12–24 he proves the divine origin of his gospel, and in ch. 2:1–10 he sets forth evidence to prove that the apostles acknowledged its validity.

12. Revelation. Gr. *apokalupsis* (see on Rev. 1:1).

Of Jesus Christ. That is, probably, a revelation of truth accorded him by Jesus Christ rather than simply one concerning Christ. Paul was instructed in the gospel “of [by] Jesus Christ,” not “of [by] men.” This would include the vision on the way to Damascus, and subsequent revelations, of which there seem to have been many. In 2 Cor. 12:7 he speaks of the “abundance of the revelations” he had received. In Gal. 1:17 he implies that much of this instruction occurred during the three years he spent in Arabia. The solitude of the desert would provide an ideal place for revelation and contemplation. The completeness of his instruction is evident from the fact that upon a subsequent visit to Jerusalem the leaders could add nothing to it (ch. 2:6). They recognized the validity of his calling to the ministry and gave him the right hand of fellowship as an apostle (vs. 7–9).

13. Conversation. Literally, “conduct” (cf. Eph. 4:22). Paul’s preconversion experience of persecuting the church, out of a spirit of fanatical loyalty to Judaism, proves that he had not formulated his concept of the gospel prior to his conversion. He reminds the Galatians that they know of his notorious conduct. This seems to have been common knowledge, for in his defense before King Agrippa he declared that his manner

of life from a youth was well known to all the Jews (Acts 26:4, 5). His former zeal for Judaism and its legal system was diametrically opposed to his present ardor for the liberty of the gospel (see Acts 26:9–11). This allusion to his past may also have been intended to call attention to the fact that his present opposition to Judaism is not the result of ignorance concerning the Jewish faith but, on the contrary, from personal experience with it.

Beyond measure. Paul's eagerness to persecute exceeded that of other Jews. It was an obsession with him, as the preaching of the gospel later became. He had not been satisfied with disturbing the church; he was out to destroy it completely (see Acts 8:3; 22:19; 26:10, 11). Had God not intervened, Paul might well have obliterated the infant church.

Wasted. Gr. *portheō*, "to destroy."

14. Profited. Gr. *prokoptō*, "to advance," "to progress." The word was used originally of a pioneer cutting his way through brushwood. Prior to conversion Paul had been considered a rising star of first magnitude in the sky of Judaism.

Equals. Literally, "contemporaries." Paul had distinguished himself not only in theological lore but in his zeal for strict observance of the ritual requirements of the law. He no doubt refers to the young men of his own generation who studied in Jerusalem under Gamaliel or other prominent Jewish teachers. His early promotion to the Sanhedrin (AA 112) testifies to the high esteem in which his elders held him.

The traditions. That is, the oral law as distinguished from the written law (see Matt. 15:2; Vol. V, p. 96). The oral law had gradually grown up to complement the written law of Moses, and was coming to be considered on an equality with God's written law, if not above it. But Jesus declared that these traditions had the effect of making the law of God null and void (see on Mark 7:13). Some commentators suggest that Paul may have belonged to the extreme party of the Pharisees, who considered themselves zealots of the law. Before King Agrippa, Paul testified that he had lived according to the strictest party of Judaism (Acts 26:4, 5).

15. God, who separated me. Textual evidence is divided (cf. p. 10) between this and the reading "the one who set me apart," that is, for the gospel ministry. From birth Paul's education and training, belief and practice, had been according to the traditions of Judaism (v. 14). There had been nothing in the background of his experience that predisposed him to reject the legal system; in fact, everything had tended strongly in the opposite direction. From a human point of view there was no satisfactory explanation of his change from belief in salvation by law to salvation by faith. The change could be attributed only to the direct interposition of God.

By his grace. Even before his birth it had been God's purpose to use Paul as His representative to the Gentiles, subject of course to Paul's own consent, and God foresaw that he would respond to the call when it came. Paul here declares that his appointment to apostleship was determined by God and not man. He had done nothing to deserve this high honor and therefore attributes it to an act of grace. His own plan for his life had been altogether different. The experience on the Damascus road had come to him as a great surprise, but he now recognized it as a special act of Providence bidding him to follow the plan God had for his life.

16. To reveal his Son. Paul's conversion to Christianity and his commission to preach the gospel were two aspects of his first personal encounter with the risen Christ (see Acts

26:12–19). It was the revelation, or appearance, of Christ to him in person on the way to Damascus (1 Cor. 15:8) that transferred his loyalty from Judaism to Christianity, and the subsequent experience of Christ dwelling within (Gal. 2:20) that led to his successful preaching of Christ among the heathen. Through Paul the world was to learn many things concerning Jesus and concerning God’s plan for mankind through His life and death. Paul became a successful instrument for preaching the gospel because he bore a personal testimony to the power of the gospel.

Among the heathen. Paul’s commission to the Gentiles had been delivered by Ananias three days after the vision on the Damascus road (see Acts 9:9, 15–17). He was not forbidden to preach to the Jews, but his chief responsibility was for non-Jews. Upon entering a city he would first go to the synagogue and there bear witness concerning Jesus before his fellow countrymen, and there he would also meet God-fearing Gentiles (see Acts 13:14, 43–48; 14:1; 17:1–4).

I conferred not. Further evidence for the divine origin of his commission was evident from the fact that he had no contact with the leaders at Jerusalem for three years (v. 17) following his conversion, and that he had received no instructions from them concerning how he was to preach Jesus.

17. Neither went I up. In order to receive the official endorsement of the church, Paul would have had to confer with the senior apostles, its recognized leaders, in Jerusalem. That he did not do so was evidence that he believed it unnecessary for him to do so. In a sense he was “born out of due time” (1 Cor. 15:8), and an apostle though not of the Twelve.

I went into Arabia. It is not known either to what part of Arabia Paul retired, or how long he was there. It was not more than three years. Some think Paul refers to the desert in the vicinity of Damascus, possibly including the city itself. Others suggest that the scene of his sojourn may have been the desert near Mt. Sinai. However, it is doubtful that Paul would have spoken of that region as “Arabia.”

The sequence of events between Paul’s conversion and his next visit to Jerusalem (v. 18) must be filled in from the narrative as given by Luke and incidental statements elsewhere in Paul’s writings. Luke does not mention the visit to Arabia, but relates only that Paul preached in Damascus after his conversion, and from there went to Jerusalem.

Combining the information from all sources, the events of this period of two or three years were as follows. After spending some time preaching in Damascus, Paul retired to Arabia. When he returned to Damascus his preaching apparently attracted unfavorable attention, for an attempt was made—doubtless instigated by the Jews—to seize him. However, he made good his escape, let down “in a basket ... by the wall” (2 Cor. 11:33). See p. 101; Early Life of Paul at Tarsus to Call to Antioch; see on Acts 9:24, 25.

18. After three years. Paul gives the Galatians a detailed account of events in his postconversion experience, that his opponents may have no occasion for saying that he secretly visited the apostles in Jerusalem at some time during this period and received his instruction from them. His apparent objective is to make clear how long it was after his

¹Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ga 1:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

conversion before he went to Jerusalem. “Three years” passed before he even saw Peter, and during part of that time he was already preaching.

To see. Or, “to visit.” When Paul did go to Jerusalem it was specifically to see Peter, but not to receive instruction from him or to secure his permission to preach. Apparently Paul’s purpose was to get acquainted with Peter and to secure his friendship. At Jerusalem Barnabas met Paul and introduced him to certain of the apostles, informing them of his conversion and of his boldness in publicly declaring Jesus to be the Son of God (see Acts 9:27).

Peter. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for reading “Cephas” (see on Matt. 16:18).

Fifteen days. During this brief stay in the city Paul was busy preaching and disputing with Greek-speaking Jews, and but a small part of this time could have been spent with the apostles (Acts 9:28, 29). Hatred soon developed, and a movement was set on foot to destroy him. One day while in the Temple he was warned in vision to leave Jerusalem quickly (Acts 22:17–21). Paul would no doubt have prolonged this visit to Jerusalem except for the bitter opposition, the threat of death, and the divine warning to leave. His purpose in mentioning this visit was to prove that the leading apostles had at that early time become acquainted with him, accepted his conversion as genuine, and, it is inferred, approved of his interpretation of the gospel (Gal. 1:24). As responsible leaders, Peter and James (vs. 18, 19) would not have failed to acquaint themselves with Paul’s teachings or to silence him if they had disapproved of what he was teaching. Specific mention of “fifteen days” lends a factual tone to the account and suggests the impossibility that he received extensive instruction while there.

19. Other of the apostles. Besides the Twelve there were others who were at one time or another spoken of as apostles, but who were never considered as belonging to the group selected and commissioned by Jesus (see Rom. 16:7; 1 Thess. 2:6).

James the Lord’s brother. Some identify this James with the son of Alphaeus, explaining that “brother” is to be understood in the general sense of “cousin,” or some other near relative. This identification arises from the belief that Paul refers to this James as an apostle. The language, however, does not require such a conclusion, and the identification is highly improbable (see Matt. 13:55; see on Mark 3:18).

20. I lie not. Paul solemnly swears to the truthfulness of what he considers a most important section of his account.

21. Syria and Cilicia. Paul was sent away from Jerusalem because of the plot against his life (Acts 9:29, 30), the Lord having warned him in a vision to flee quickly from the city (see ch. 22:17, 18). At this time Syria and Cilicia were united under one Roman provincial administration (see The Journeys of Paul). Tarsus, Paul’s home city, was in Cilicia. The NT record passes over the next five years or so in silence (see on Acts 9:30). Supposedly Paul engaged in active ministry in Tarsus and that vicinity. Some five years later Barnabas went to Tarsus and brought Paul with him to Antioch, where they both taught for a whole year (Acts 11:25, 26).

22. Unknown by face. Paul probably became known to the Christians in Jerusalem during the 15 days he spent there, for Luke says that he went in and out among them at Jerusalem (Acts 9:26–28), but not to the Christian communities outside the city.

23. He which persecuted. Paul had been altogether sincere in persecuting this hated sect (see Acts 26:9, 10). Not content with rooting Christianity out of Jerusalem and the cities of Judea, he pursued his objective even in regions beyond Palestine.

Preacheth the faith. What a change has come over the persecutor! News of this miracle of the faith was being heralded everywhere. Paul here notes that the Jews of Palestine acknowledged the genuine quality of his preaching and teaching. Apparently no one detected any significant difference between his gospel and that proclaimed by the apostles themselves.

24. In me. That is, they found in Paul, in his conversion, and in his ministry, reason for praising God.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 AA 127, 387
- 3 AA 384
- 3, 4 AA 208
- 4 DA 266; MH 70
- 6–8AA 384
- 6–9EW 27
- 8 GC 243
- 10 2T 492
- 11–16AA 386
- 17 AA 125; Ed 65; SR 274
- 17, 18 AA 128
- 21, 23 AA 156
- 24 GW 65; 6T 413

CHAPTER 2

1 *He sheweth when he went up again to Jerusalem, and for what purpose: 3 and that Titus was not circumcised: 11 and that he resisted Peter, and told him the reason, 14 why he and other, being Jews, do believe in Christ to be justified by faith, and not by works: 20 and that they live not in sin, who are so justified.*

1. Fourteen years after. Paul's line of thought continues without interruption. It is not clear whether this 14-year period began with his conversion or with his visit to Jerusalem three years later. For comment on the problem see p. 100 and Additional Note Acts 15. The purpose in mentioning the 14 years is to point out how long it was after his conversion before Paul had an extended contact with the Twelve. He had not borrowed from them the gospel he had been preaching for some 14 (or 17) years.

Again to Jerusalem. If the 3-year and the 14-year periods are successive, it was 17 years from Paul's conversion to the time of his second visit to Jerusalem, and 14 years since the brief 15-day visit there with Peter (ch. 1:18). As already noted (vs. 18, 19), there had been little opportunity for Paul to learn anything from the apostles at the time of that first visit. In ch. 2:1–10 Paul makes it clear that he is in no way indebted to the apostles for the message he has been preaching (see on vs. 6, 7). For the relation of the visit of Gal. 2:1–10 to that of Acts 11:25–30 see pp. 318, 319. This commentary favors equating the visit of Gal. 2:1–10 with that of Acts 15.

With Barnabas. When the apostles Paul was sent by the church at Antioch to attend the council in Jerusalem certain others accompanied him, one of these being Barnabas (see Acts 15:2). Considering the accounts of Acts 15 and Gal. 2 to be parallel, one of

them was Titus. Luke makes no mention of Titus in connection with any of Paul's journeys. Paul's first reference to him is in the second Corinthian letter, where he evidently considers him a most valuable helper (see on 2 Cor. 2:13).

2. By revelation. Granting that this is the same visit as that of Acts 15, Paul's statement here that God directed him to visit Jerusalem appears to be in conflict with that of Luke, who says that Paul and Barnabas were sent to Jerusalem by the Antioch church. Apparently both Paul and the church at Antioch were directed by God to make the visit to Jerusalem to which the apostle here makes reference. In a similar way the Holy Spirit and the church were united in sending Paul and Barnabas forth on their First Missionary Journey (Acts 13:2, 3). Compare also Num. 13:1, 2 with Deut. 1:22. Often Paul was the recipient of heavenly illumination. At various times he was directed, warned, or encouraged by God (see Acts 16:9; 20:23; 23:11; 27:22–26).

Communicated. Or, "declared," "set forth." The instructions Paul received by revelation directed him to go to Jerusalem and to present before the leaders there the gospel he had been preaching among the Gentiles. In view of the doubt in the minds of some concerning his qualifications as an apostle and the nature of his gospel, this procedure seems most appropriate. The leaders in Jerusalem had the right and duty to know.

Privately. Wisely, Paul sought to avoid unnecessarily stirring up opposition to the course of action to which God had called him, yet at the same time took counsel with the recognized leaders of the church.

Of reputation. That is, those who were leaders, identified in v. 9 as James, Peter, and John. There is no reason to doubt that Paul recognized the position of these senior apostles, though later (v. 6) he minimizes the value of any instruction he may have received from them.

Lest by any means. Paul does not here suggest a doubt in his mind concerning the soundness of his gospel, but of the success of his visit to Jerusalem. He feared that the brethren in Jerusalem might disapprove of his gospel ministry among the Gentiles. This would be a major victory for his Judaizing opponents and a serious obstacle to his plans for evangelizing the Gentiles. Had the Judaizers been able to oppose Paul with official letters from the twelve apostles condemning him and his gospel, he would have been cast in the role of an apostle of error.

3. Circumcised. Verses 3–5 are parenthetical to the main line of argument. The incident of Titus is tangible evidence that the apostles understood and approved Paul's gospel. There may be another and equally important reason in Paul's mind for inserting this incident. Timothy, himself a Galatian, half Jew and half Gentile, had been circumcised at the beginning of his ministry as a concession to Jewish prejudice (Acts 16:1–3). For a statement of the principle involved see 1 Cor. 9:21–23. The compromise was a practical one intended to facilitate the preaching of the gospel among the Jews of Gentile lands. In the case of Titus, a full-blooded Gentile, it was different. Had Paul consented to circumcise Titus he would have denied his gospel and appeared to admit that these outward forms were essential to salvation. Paul's purpose in mentioning the incident involving Titus is to cite an instance where the apostles themselves did not require a Gentile convert to be circumcised. Obviously they did not concede to the demands of the "false brethren" of Gal. 2:4, 5. The false teachers who have been leading the Galatians astray must face these facts, which confront them with an argument they

will find most difficult to answer. The fact that the leaders in Jerusalem did not press Titus to be circumcised is evidence of their stand in the matter.

This incident reveals both Paul's consistency and the willingness of the leaders to lay aside prejudice and recognize truth when it was presented to them. This spirit made it possible for God to work through the early church in a marvelous way. He looks for the same spirit of love and tolerance in the church today. There must be the same willingness to accept new light when it is presented, if the church is to attain to new heights of spiritual experience, and new depths—a new comprehension—of God's plan for His church.

4. False brethren. These bigoted Judaizers were probably the Pharisee Christians of Acts 15:5. Their purpose was to influence believing Jews against Paul because of his indifference to the requirements of the ceremonial law.

To spy out. Their pretended friendliness had a sinister motive—jealousy of the “freedom” of Gentile converts.

Liberty. That is, freedom from the requirements of the ritual law and from legalism as a means of salvation (see p. 933).

Bondage. That is, to the requirements of the ritual law and to legalism (see chs. 4:3, 9, 24, 25, 31; 5:1, 2). All who adopt the principle of legalism—that salvation can be earned by conformity to a prescribed code—obviously bind themselves to comply with every requirement of that code. They become bondservants of the law, obliged to do “all things which are written in the book of the law” (ch. 3:10). Should the Judaizers have their way, the liberty of the gospel would be exchanged for the bondage that comes from dependence on works.

5. To whom. That is, to the Judaizers and their demand that Titus be circumcised.

Gave place by subjection. Or, “submitted.” The very question now troubling the churches of Galatia had arisen at Jerusalem with respect to Titus. But the apostles apparently refused to support the demand of the Judaizers that Titus be circumcised. Thus, in attempting to force circumcision upon the Galatians, it was the Judaizers—not Paul—who stood opposed to the position of the apostles.

The truth. To have yielded to the Judaizers—either at Jerusalem or in Galatia—would have been to deny the great principle of justification by faith. It was in no sense an exhibition of stubbornness on Paul's part; rather it was a determined stand against an attempt to pervert the gospel by substituting justification by the works of the law for the cardinal truth of the gospel—justification by faith.

6. Seemed to be somewhat. That is, probably, the apostles themselves, the recognized leaders of the church. These persons are also described in v. 2 as men “of reputation.” Verse 6 continues the line of thought interrupted by vs. 3–5. Paul does not here speak deprecatingly of these men “of reputation,” as might at first appear, for their acceptance of him and approval of his gospel (chs. 1:24; 2:9) constitute important evidence confirming his authority as an apostle. See v. 9.

Whatsoever they were. The purpose of this parenthesis is to remind the Galatians that the question under discussion is not the excellence of the apostles but the validity of Paul's gospel. Personality, and even high office, is of less consequence than truth. Unquestionably the Twelve had had great privileges. They had been associated personally with Jesus for three years. They had heard Him preach. They had witnessed His miracles. Paul is not detracting from the importance of the apostles, but he endeavors

to make clear that their position and office could have no bearing whatever on the problem under consideration. God did not consult man with respect to what is truth, but commissioned him to declare truth. To this important duty Paul has been called, even as had the Twelve.

Person. Literally, “face,” that is, outward appearance in contrast with inward character (see on 1 Sam. 16:7). This being God’s method of evaluation, why should position or rank be considered more highly than character? Truth is of paramount importance, while the position or rank of those proclaiming it is of little consequence. Nevertheless, Paul ever loyally supported those who had been appointed to positions of responsibility in the church. He held in highest esteem those who, like himself, had been commissioned by God to preach the gospel. He considered his own call a high honor and believed it carried authority which he was under obligation to exercise when the occasion demanded (see Rom. 11:13; 2 Cor. 13:2). Compare Acts 10:34.

Added nothing. Paul’s gospel had come from the same source as that of the apostles, and was a complete gospel. To add to or subtract from it would mar its perfection. The strength of his argument is that, although Paul had not conferred with, or been instructed by, the Twelve, his gospel was nevertheless the same as theirs. Examining the demand of the Judaizers that Titus and all Gentile converts to Christianity be required to submit to circumcision, the apostles found themselves in complete agreement with Paul. They did not propose that Paul either alter or modify his stand.

7. Gospel of the uncircumcision. There are not two different gospels, one for the circumcised and the other for the uncircumcised. As Paul makes clear in chs. 3 and 4, both Jew and Gentile are saved by faith and not by the works of the law (see ch. 3:28). The works of the law are really not a part of the gospel at all. The difference was not in the message, but in the prior status of those to whom it was given.

Unto Peter. There are two circles of hearers—Jew and Gentile—but one gospel. Paul was commissioned an ambassador to one and Peter to the other (see vs. 7–9).

8. Wrought effectually in. Literally, “worked in,” that is, animated. The word “effectually” was supplied by the translators. The success of Peter’s ministry constituted evidence that God was at work through him. But the same was true of Paul’s ministry. It would be inconsistent to acclaim the one and denounce the other. The source of Paul’s authority and power is the same as that of Peter. If one is an apostle, so is the other.

Was mighty in. Identical in the Greek with the word translated “wrought effectually in,” in the first part of the verse.

9. James. Not the brother of John, who had been put to death before Paul’s First Missionary Journey (Acts 12:1, 2), but doubtless “James the Lord’s brother,” already introduced in Gal. 1:19. The fact that he is named first implies that he was, at the time, leader among the apostles at Jerusalem. In Luke’s account of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) James ranks first among the leaders of the church (see vs. 13, 19–22). The fact that James, the acknowledged leader of the church, had not been one of the Twelve, deflates the charge of the Judaizers that Paul cannot be considered a genuine apostle. A few ancient manuscripts and versions read “Peter and James,” obviously to make Peter appear to be first among the apostles.

Cephas. See on Matt. 16:18; Mark 3:16.

John. See on Mark 3:17.

Seemed to be. That is, were generally held to be. Paul may purposely have avoided saying that these three *were* leaders. The success or failure of the gospel does not depend upon any man or group of men. No person is indispensable to its success.

Pillars. That is, leaders in the church. If James, who is not of the Twelve, is held in such high esteem as to be rated a “pillar” in the church on an equality with Peter and John, why not Paul also?

The right hands. The leading apostles entered into a formal, friendly agreement with Paul, acknowledging his apostleship and approving his gospel. The giving of the right hand was a practice familiar to other nations as well as to the Jews. This act obviously involved more than a grudging admission that God had called and blessed Paul and Barnabas, and a reluctant concession to their views. The apostles, by this gesture, recognized them as equal in the Christian ministry. Also, their gospel was accepted as pure and worthy to be preached.

Fellowship. Gr. *koinōnia*, “participation,” “sharing,” “association.”

Unto the heathen. The apostles were not jealous of the success reported by Paul and Barnabas, but rejoiced in it. They consented to Paul’s continuation of his work, as formerly, among the Gentiles. This is a good illustration of the possibility of reaching a harmonious solution to difficult church problems without harsh contention or strife. Many conflicts that disgraced the church in later centuries would never have occurred had the believers been as honest and noble-minded as the leaders of apostolic times.

10. Remember the poor. This doubtless refers to poor Christians in Judea. Two reasons are evident for this request. The first, of course, is the need. The second is a desire to prevent alienation of the new Gentile converts from the Jewish Christians. The fact that he has been formally accepted by the leaders of the church as apostle to the Gentiles will not alter his attitude toward his kinsmen, the Jews.

I also was forward. Paul zealously honored this request, making repeated appeals to the Gentile churches of Macedonia and Greece for liberal contributions (see Rom. 15:25–27; 1 Cor. 16:3; 2 Cor. 8).

11. Peter was come. Although Peter’s conduct (vs. 11–14) seems strange to us after his experience with Cornelius (Acts 10:19 to 11:18), and especially after the decision of the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15:7, 22, 29), it is evident that Paul is here narrating the incident in its proper chronological order. It should be remembered that the decision of the Jerusalem Council pertained to Gentile believers only. It did not specifically release Jewish Christians from the requirements of the ritual law. Having lost their case with respect to Gentile converts, the Judaizers naturally refused to read more into the decision than was actually stated. But Paul and others rightly reasoned that if Gentiles could be saved apart from the ritual law, so could the Jews. When in Jerusalem Paul had no serious objection to participating in ritual ceremonies himself (cf. Acts 21:20–27), as a Jew. As with eating food offered to idols (1 Cor. 10:27–29), no moral principle was involved (ch. 8:8). Paul’s concern on this occasion was for the members of the church (cf. 1 Cor. 10:29–33), and the church at Antioch was composed largely of Gentiles (Acts 11:19–21). Peter therefore should have been ready to stand firmly in the position he originally took, of entering into full fellowship with the Gentile believers on a basis of full reciprocity.

This visit of Peter to Antioch was apparently made soon after the close of the Jerusalem Council. From Acts 15:1, 2 it is evident that the discussion at Antioch concerning the question of circumcision had provided the immediate occasion for calling

that council. Now that the question had been settled in a way seemingly satisfactory to all concerned, it would be natural for at least some of the leaders to visit Antioch. From the record of Peter's participation in the council (see Acts 15:6–11), particularly his experience in the home of Cornelius, he would be expected to do what he could at Antioch to compose differences of opinion and to help carry out the decision of the council.

I withstood him. This incident clearly proves Paul's equality as an apostle and vindicates his argument against requiring the Gentiles to conform to Jewish legal practices (see v. 14). Paul, Barnabas, and two others had been chosen to carry the decision of the council back to Antioch (see Acts 15:22, 23). Because Peter had been favorable to, and no doubt concurred wholeheartedly in, the decision, it can hardly be said that there was a controversy between him and Paul. They were in agreement, at least on the general principles, and thus on the decision, laid down at the council with respect to the status of Gentiles within the Christian church. This clear and unequivocal decision doubtless provided the basis of Paul's open rebuke to Peter, and justified it.

It should be possible for church leaders to discuss various opinions without creating feelings of resentment. It is reasonable to assume that Peter's silence reflected his admission of having erred in judgment. This was a noble thing for him to do. Unity of effort is necessary for success in any enterprise. The church can never fulfill her commission until there is the same type of honesty and straightforwardness that was evident among apostolic leaders.

He was to be blamed. Some early church writers insisted that the Peter here mentioned was not the apostle Peter but one of the Seventy. Others claimed that the two apostles had arranged the scene beforehand as a lesson to the Judaizers that they should be as willing to submit as Peter was under Paul's persuasive arguments. These and other attempts to explain away the simple facts were prompted by the preconceived belief in the primacy of Peter and an unwillingness to admit that he could have been in the wrong, to say nothing about his being openly rebuked by a fellow apostle. Apparently Peter realized his own error and made no attempt to justify or excuse himself. Such a reaction is in keeping with what might be expected of Peter after his great confession (see John 21:15–17). It marked him as a man of noble spiritual stature.

12. From James. The most that can safely be inferred concerning these believers who are said to have come from James is that they were members of the Jerusalem church, of which James was the leader. Inasmuch as it is not stated that he sent them, it would be an unwarranted assumption to say they had come with official authorization from James. They apparently represented the circumcision party, and were probably Pharisee Christians (see Acts 15:5). They may have come to Antioch without the approval of James. Certainly they did not have his authorization to stir up trouble, for in his remarks at the council he had given evidence of his sincere desire for harmony among the believers everywhere (Acts 15:13–21).

With the Gentiles. Prior to his vision and the subsequent experience at the home of Cornelius (Acts 10:9–48), Peter would not have associated with Gentiles as he now did at Antioch. His precaution in taking along six witnesses (Acts 11:12) reflects his fear that the brethren in Jerusalem would be hesitant to accept his testimony if it stood alone. But after the unusual demonstration of God's approval evident in the gift of the Spirit before their baptism, Peter was confident of the acceptance of the Gentiles into the Christian

church. This confidence was confirmed by the attitude of the Jerusalem Council several years later (Acts 15). There was no longer room for legitimate doubt on this question. Therefore when Peter went to Antioch he felt free to join his brethren in fellowship with the Gentile believers.

Withdrew and separated. Apparently, Peter quietly discontinued his association with the Gentiles, without explanation. Probably this separation involved no more than a break in social relationships.

Fearing them. In self-defense Peter sought to avoid further conflict with these unreasonable, Judaizing brethren from Jerusalem. It was the same group that had stirred up trouble in Antioch, prior to the council, by insisting on the circumcision of all Gentiles who sought admission to the Christian church (see Acts 15:5). Representatives of this party had also subverted the loyalty of many in the church at Corinth (see on 2 Cor. 11:22). Peter's fear may have been due, in part at least, to the same spirit of caution that prompted him to take six fellow Jews to the home of Cornelius (Acts 11:12). After all, the Jerusalem Council had not provided that Jews might associate freely with Gentiles (see on Gal. 2:11), and Peter may have feared that these Judaizing brethren would interpret his actions in a way he would find it difficult to explain when he returned to Jerusalem.

13. Dissembled. Literally, "acted under a mask with [Peter]," that is, acted the part of hypocrites. Peter and these "other Jews" knew they were not doing right, but compromised themselves in order to avoid trouble with the Judaizers. They acted as they did in order to conceal their true sentiments from those who had come from Jerusalem. They pretended to side with the Judaizing brethren. If Paul's charge of insincerity was true—and there is no reason to doubt that it was—Peter did well to remain silent, as he seems to have done. Nothing can be said in defense of his conduct, nor can it be excused.

Barnabas also. It must have been a great blow to Paul when his own familiar friend and co-worker succumbed to the pressure of popular opinion. Apparently, even strong Christian leaders are in danger of yielding their own convictions if sufficient pressure is brought to bear upon them.

Dissimulation. Literally, "hypocrisy," "insincerity."

14. Walked not uprightly. The course of Peter, Barnabas, and the other Jews would bring confusion and division in the church. The question involved far more than the conduct of leaders. The welfare of the Gentile believers was at stake, and even the fate of the gospel itself. If the Judaizing party were permitted to have its way, then the gospel—salvation through faith in the atoning death of Jesus—would be superseded by the doctrine of salvation through the works of the law. Thus "the truth of the gospel" would no longer be proclaimed.

Before them all. The rebuke was public because the offense was public. All, or nearly all, were concerned. To Timothy, Paul later wrote that a public rebuke for open sin would effectively deter others from following the same course (see 1 Tim. 5:20). The action of Peter and the other Jews created a rift in the fellowship of the church and threatened to shatter the unity of Gentile and Jew in Christ. The prospect was disastrous. Paul addressed his remarks to Peter because his course of action was primarily responsible for the crisis that had arisen upon that occasion.

The manner of Gentiles. It had taken a miracle to convince Peter that Gentiles should be admitted to Christian fellowship on an equality with the Jews (see Acts 10:20, 28, 29,

34). Since that experience he had evidently felt free to associate with Gentiles, contrary to Jewish custom. His apparent silence, when rebuked, implies that he recognized the error of his hasty move and the seriousness of its implications for the future of the church as a universal, united body. This much may be conceded in Peter's favor.

Why compellest thou? Peter's sudden change of attitude would require the Gentiles to comply with the demands of the Judaizers that they be circumcised and observe Jewish rites if friendly relations between them and Jewish Christians were to continue. This would virtually be compelling the Gentiles to live like Jews. Paul here points out the inconsistency resulting from this attitude of Christian Jews toward the Gentiles in the church.

15. Jews by nature. That is, literal descendants of Abraham. It is not altogether clear whether vs. 15–21 are part of Paul's public censure of Peter at Antioch or whether Paul again addresses the Galatian churches directly. It is reasonable to consider the absence of any obvious transition as indicating that Paul here repeats in substance what he said to Peter, rephrased and addressed to the Christians in Galatia. Verses 15, 16 in particular seem to be addressed to Jewish Christians, but whether in Antioch or in Galatia is not certain. The fact that v. 14 speaks of Jewish Christians in Antioch may imply that Paul is still quoting what he said to them.

Sinners of the Gentiles. Or, "Gentile sinners," probably a common Jewish term reflecting a certain measure of contempt for the unregenerate Gentiles as being a lesser breed, without the law. Paul admitted that there were certain advantages in being a Jew (see Rom. 3:1, 2; 9:4, 5), but when it came to their standing before God, all were sinners in need of salvation (see ch. 3:9). The Gentiles were, in a sense, at a disadvantage, for they had not enjoyed all the benefits that had been accorded the Jews. Nevertheless, Gentiles are without excuse (see Rom. 1:20).

16. Justified. Or, "reckoned righteous" (see on Rom. 3:20, 28; 4:8, 25).

The works of the law. Literally, "works of law" (see on Rom. 2:12). Paul here refers not so much to the ritual observances of the ceremonial law alone as to the Jewish concept that a man could save himself by meticulously keeping (see on 2 Cor. 3:3–9) "the law," which consisted of moral, ceremonial, and civil precepts (see pp. 933, 934). In his Epistle to the Galatians, Paul is concerned only with the moral and ceremonial codes. The civil code apparently did not enter directly into the problem under discussion. The Jews erred in: (1) considering that salvation could be attained by one's own efforts, through compliance with the requirements of "the law," and by virtue of a meritorious life in which a surplus of good deeds would cancel out evil deeds, (2) adding to the law, as given by God, a mass of man-made requirements, commonly called "tradition" (see Vol. V, p. 96; see on Mark 7:3), and (3) extending, and attempting to enforce, certain features of the ritual and ceremonial provisions of "the law" beyond the cross, when they expired by limitation. All of this was no doubt in Paul's mind as he wrote. As already stated, the word "law," as used by Paul in the book of Galatians, includes both the moral law, or Decalogue, and the ceremonial law (see EGW Supplementary Material on Gal. 3:24). But Paul is not concerned so much with either of these, as such, as he is with the Jewish legal system of righteousness by works, which was based upon them.

Faith of Jesus Christ. That is, faith in Jesus Christ (see on John 1:12; 3:16; Rom. 4:3; 5:1). Justification comes as a free gift of God through Jesus Christ (see on John 3:16). Works have no part in this transaction. On God's part it is a gift made possible through

Jesus Christ. On man's part it requires complete faith and trust in God that He is able and willing to justify a sinner. Faith is the means by which man receives justification.

We have believed. This was true of Peter as well as of Paul, and Peter already knew that observance of the law could not justify anyone. It was for this reason that they had turned to Christ for salvation from sin. This very profession, Paul intimates, is an acknowledgment that their former observances were in and of themselves worthless and void.

No flesh. That is, no man, or no human being. See on Rom. 3:20.

17. We. That is, "we who are Jews" (v. 15), meaning Christian Jews, Jews who "seek to be justified by Christ."

Seek to be justified. Professedly at least, Christian Jews acknowledged the need of coming to Christ for salvation, thus tacitly admitting the inadequacy of "the works of the law" (v. 16).

We ourselves. In the Greek the pronoun is emphatic.

Are found sinners. That is, in addition to the Gentile sinners of v. 15. The Greek reads literally, "were found sinners," meaning at some particular time in the past, after having become Christians. Christ had promised justification to those who should come unto God through Him (see v. 16). But if those who do so are still "sinners," then the provision of grace made by Christ is insufficient. He, having made a promise, is unable to fulfill it, and thus must be held responsible for the remaining state of sin.

Minister of sin. Or, "agent of sin," that is, the one through whom we became sinners, and thus the one to blame for our being sinners. If the demands of the Judaizing Christians were followed, such would appear to be the case, for, though they called themselves Christians, they maintained the necessity of a strict fulfillment of the ceremonial law in order to be free from sin. If this were so, why be a Christian at all? Thus Christians would be back where they began, sinners condemned by the law. If Christ requires this of them, Paul concludes, then Christ has become an agent, or accomplice, of sin.

God forbid. Literally, "May it not be!" Away with such an idea! Yet such was the logical, though absurd, conclusion to which the position of the Judaizers led. The idea is preposterous and altogether out of harmony with a true concept of what Christ has done to save man from the plight into which his sins have brought him. To attempt to substitute works for faith is to confuse and distort the simple truth of the gospel that salvation is by faith alone.

18. If I build. That is, if after I, as a Jewish Christian, have recognized the utter inefficacy of the law as a means of salvation and have turned to Christ for justification, I return to the Jewish legal system in an attempt to find justification.

Things which I destroyed. That is, the ritual observances of Judaism as a means to salvation. For a Jew to accept Christ was a tacit admission that in and of itself Judaism could not save a man. Even though Paul writes in the first person, it is evident that he is thinking of what would be true of all Jewish converts to Christianity.

A transgressor. For a converted Jew to return to the practices of Judaism as a means of salvation would be to admit the inadequacy of Christ to save a man by faith alone. Furthermore, it would be an admission that he had done wrong to turn away from Judaism in the first place, and, by doing so, had made himself "a transgressor" of the

ritual law. This was the very thing Peter had done (vs. 11–14), and which all Judaizers were doing.

19. For I. In the Greek the pronoun “I” is emphatic. Whereas in v. 18 Paul speaks as if he were one of the Judaizers, he now refers to personal experience (vs. 19–21).

Through the law. By personal experience in seeking salvation through compliance with the requirements of the legal system Paul had proved to his own satisfaction the inefficacy of that system. Furthermore, he now saw that the law pointed the sinner to Christ.

Dead to the law. That is, have nothing more to do with it. Formerly Paul had expected to be justified by careful compliance with all the law’s requirements. This had been the objective of his life. Now that the law’s true purpose had become clear to him he realized that he could expect no help from that source. Accordingly, he had abandoned the legal system altogether as a means of salvation.

Live unto God. His life was now oriented toward God, as it had formerly been toward the law. His purpose in life was now to appropriate the means of salvation God had graciously provided (see Phil. 3:13).

20. Crucified with Christ. That is, Paul had accepted the atonement provided by Christ’s death upon the cross (see Rom. 6:3–11; Phil. 3:8–10). He considered himself as dead to sin, to the world, and to man-devised methods of attaining to righteousness, as if he had actually been crucified. These methods no longer appealed to him, and in his heart there was no response to them.

Nevertheless I live. The Greek translated “nevertheless I live; yet not I,” may also be rendered, “it is no longer I who live.” Both are appropriate to the context, and either way the sense of the statement as a whole is unchanged.

While dead to some things, Paul was very much alive to others. He was as active after conversion as he was before, for the life of a Christian is not one of inactivity. Jesus spoke of this new life as a more abundant life (see John 10:10). Since Jesus is the source of life, there can be no true appreciation of life apart from Him.

Christ liveth in me. This is the secret of a successful Christian life—Christ abiding within and living out in us the same perfect life that He lived here on earth. The love of Christ constrains him (2 Cor. 5:14), and the righteousness of Christ becomes a reality in his life (Rom. 8:3, 4).

In the flesh. That is, this present life. The Christian is still in the world, though not of it (John 17:11, 14).

Faith of the Son of God. That is, faith in the Son of God. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for reading “faith in God and Christ.”

21. Frustrate. Or, “thwart,” “nullify,” “make void.” To return to the legal system of righteousness by works would nullify all that has been received through the grace of God, by faith in Jesus Christ. Paul refuses even for one moment to concede to the demands of those who, like Peter and the Judaizers, insist on a return to the works of the law as a requirement for justification. This must be considered as a reproof to the attitude taken by Peter (see on v. 15). Thus Paul’s evident conclusion is that all who, like Peter, separate themselves from the Gentile Christians, will be frustrating the grace of God.

If righteousness come. If grace is not needed the gospel has no value or appeal. In discussing the righteousness which Abraham received through faith, Paul argues that the rewards of one who works are not a favor or a gift; they belong to him, as the result of his

own efforts (see Rom. 4:4, 5). Now if, by the works of the law, one may obtain all the benefits that come through the gospel, the plan for man's redemption through Jesus Christ has been made unnecessary. The logic of this conclusion must have been apparent to Peter and to all who were following his example.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

11-44AA 198

20 AA 251; CT 36; DA 390, 510; MB 15, 94; MH 62, 457; MM 203; MYP 84; SC 63, 72; TM 389, 400; 2T 145, 321, 443, 566; 4T 349; 8T 317

CHAPTER 3

1 *He asketh what moved them to leave the faith, and hang upon the law?* 6 *They that believe are justified, 9 and blessed with Abraham.* 10 *And this he sheweth by many reasons.*

1. Foolish Galatians. The Galatians had shown their lack of understanding by yielding to the influence of the false teachers. There was no valid reason for their decision to renounce salvation by faith.

Bewitched you. They had been grossly misled. Paul now writes them in the hope that they will see their inconsistency and turn from the evident error into which they have fallen. They must have been subjected to some influence besides reason, for reason would condemn such a course. Their choice cannot have been the result of sober judgment based on facts.

That ye should not obey the truth. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this clause.

Evidently set forth. Gr. *prographō*, "to portray openly." The word was commonly used in Paul's day of public notices or proclamations. The Galatians could not profess ignorance of the truths of the gospel, for Paul had made these so plain that it was as though they had seen Jesus with their own eyes.

Crucified. Not crucified among them, but represented among them as crucified. Paul gloried in the cross of Christ and made it the center of his preaching (see 1 Cor. 1:23; 2:1, 2; 15:3). The Galatians had understood the significance of Christ's death. It had been made as real to them as though they had witnessed it with their own eyes. They had accepted this sacrifice as being necessary for their justification. How could they now turn to the false doctrines they had recently accepted, as though all Paul had taught them was sheer fantasy?

2. This only. One point would be enough to settle the matter. In the argument that follows (vs. 6-29), Paul explores and develops the question propounded in vs. 1-5. If the Galatians will answer the one question he now asks, in the light of the following discussion, it will be sufficient to convince them of their mistake.

Received ye the Spirit. That is, the Holy Spirit, as promised by Jesus ere His return to the Father (John 14:16, 17). The Spirit was to reprove of sin, to direct men to Christ, and to guide them into truth (see John 16:7-13). The Galatian believers had experienced the guidance of the Spirit in their lives and had witnessed the manifestation of the gifts of the Spirit (see 1 Cor. 12; Eph. 4:10-13). All this had come since their acceptance of the gospel of Christ as taught them by Paul. There could be no uncertainty as to the source of these spiritual blessings.

Works of the law. See on Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16.

Hearing of faith. That is, faith that results from hearing the gospel (Rom. 10:17), or hearing that is accompanied by faith. Through faith the Galatians had accepted salvation as provided by Jesus and had experienced the blessings of the Spirit that followed. Like Cornelius (Acts 10:44), they had believed what they heard and had received the “earnest of the Spirit” as evidence that God accepted their faith (see on 2 Cor. 1:22). They had accepted Paul’s instruction concerning justification by faith and had experienced it in their lives.

3. Are ye so foolish? See on v. 1.

Begun in the Spirit. See on v. 2. The Christian life is a spiritual experience, which begins with the Spirit convicting the heart of sin, and continues by His guiding the life into channels of righteousness (John 16:8). The Galatians had already received rich blessings from God and many evidences of His presence in their midst, but this was only a beginning. It was strange indeed that they should turn their backs on God just when He had begun to work out His plan for them. What rich blessings they would forfeit if they abandoned God’s way and set out on a path of human devising!

By the flesh. That is, by the materialistic concepts and legalistic practices of Judaism.

4. Suffered. Or, “endured.” Like other Christians, the Galatians had undoubtedly suffered much because of their attachment to Christianity, although there is no record of it in the book of Acts. The Thessalonians experienced persecution (see 1 Thess. 2:14). In Gal. 4:29 Paul refers indirectly to the suffering that Christians were then enduring for the sake of the gospel.

In vain. If their former, Spirit-guided life had been a mistake, then all the suffering they had encountered as a result of it had been in vain. It was because of their belief in the atonement provided by Jesus that they had suffered persecution. Paul sincerely hoped this suffering had not been in vain, and that, even yet, the Galatians would recognize their mistake and return to their former loyalty.

5. Ministereth to you. According to some commentators, the person here spoken of as ministering to the Galatians was Paul. His ministry among them had testified to saving faith and to the power of the Spirit at work in his own life (v. 5), and similarly their acceptance of his gospel was evidence of faith and of the Spirit operating in their lives (v. 2). If they faced the question of v. 5 sincerely, the Galatians would have no difficulty answering the questions of vs. 2–4. Other commentators explain that the word “he” refers to God, and that it is He who supplies the Spirit and works miracles among them. However, the last half of v. 5, when compared with v. 2, implies that a human being is in the writer’s mind. Paul was clearly the agent, or instrument, through whom God bestowed these remarkable endowments. Paul’s point is that his ministry, and their response to it, had been on the basis of faith, with no reliance on the provisions of the legal system.

6. Abraham believed God. A citation from the LXX of Gen. 15:6, where the reference is to Abraham’s acceptance of the covenant promises by faith. Paul’s opponents had made it appear that Paul had no regard for the writings of Moses, to which they had attached an exaggerated importance. Meeting them now on their own ground, Paul quotes from Moses to prove his position. In fact, the experience of Abraham—in whom they boasted—is an example of what Paul believes should be the experience of all Christians. In Rom. 4:1–3 Paul quotes the same Scripture as evidence that Abraham was justified by faith and not by works. If that was true of Abraham, it must be true of his descendants

(Gal. 3:7), and doubly so of his spiritual children (vs. 14, 26–29). The important point is the superiority of faith over the law as a means of attaining righteousness.

Accounted. Or, “counted,” “reckoned.” Abraham’s faith was credited to his account in heaven, thus balancing the account. Accordingly, God considered Abraham a righteous man. Works had nothing to do with his attainment of this favorable credit rating in the books of heaven. God simply offered it to him and he accepted it by faith, believing that God meant exactly what He said. His own efforts could never have purchased this blessed status. See on Rom. 4:9–13.

Faith does not satisfy the demands of the law, for the law requires perfect obedience. Therefore, if one is to be justified by faith, it must be on the basis of some other principle than the works of the law. To be credited as righteous means being forgiven and admitted to the favor of God. Man can do nothing to deserve the gift of Christ’s righteousness; he cannot claim it on the basis of merit. Divine grace makes it possible for a just God to consider repentant sinners righteous.

Righteousness. Gr. *dikaïosunē* (see on Matt. 5:6).

7. They which are of faith. That is, those who rely on faith in the saving merits of Christ, without “the works of the law” (see on ch. 2:16).

Children of Abraham. That is, his spiritual—not necessarily physical—descendants (see vs. 26–29). All who have the same unwavering faith that Abraham had are considered his spiritual heirs. They attain to righteousness as he did and are eligible to receive all the blessings promised him. In Rom. 4:10, 11 Paul stresses the fact that God imputed righteousness to Abraham *before* he was circumcised—the first so-called “work” of the law performed for every Jew and for every convert to Judaism. If Abraham could find justification apart from the works of the law, certainly Gentiles can do the same. This is the heart of Paul’s argument against the Judaizers, who were insisting on circumcision as a necessary prerequisite to justification. Paul argues that there is no difference between the way in which a Jew and a Gentile find favor with God; all are saved, if they find salvation at all, by faith (Rom. 3:22; 10:12). No Jew or Gentile was ever saved by “works.” The only way that any man can be saved is through faith in Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12).

8. Scripture. That is, the OT; here, particularly, the writings of Moses.

Foreseeing. The quotation is from Gen. 12:3. The promise to Abraham was a statement of the divine purpose to send the Saviour into the world (see on Gal. 3:16) and to save all who choose to come to Him in faith (v. 14).

Justify. Gr. *dikaioō* (see on Rom. 3:20).

Heathen. Gr. *ethnē*, “nations”; in NT usage always non-Jewish, pagan, Gentile nations. NT writers use the word *laos*, literally, “people,” when referring to the Jewish nation. It was good news to the gentiles that God offered them justification on the same basis as that on which He offered it to the Jews, that is, by faith.

Preached before the gospel. Gr. *proeuaggelizomai*, literally, “to announce good tidings beforehand.” The promise of Gen. 12:3 was an advance announcement of the good news of salvation through Christ. The good news announced to Abraham was that the blessing of salvation—of justification by faith—would come to all nations through him. Abraham had no righteousness of his own. Christ’s righteousness was imputed to

him by God, and he accepted it by faith. All who become righteous, or justified, do so by faith, as did Abraham. This ever has been, and always will be, the only way men can experience justification.

In thee. Or, “through thee.” Abraham and his descendants were made the custodians of the good news of salvation and were commissioned to be its heralds to all men. Furthermore, one of his descendants was to be the Saviour of mankind. Thus, it was in these two respects that all nations were to receive the blessings of salvation through Abraham.

All nations. For a summary of OT instruction concerning the manner in which God purposed to evangelize “all nations” through His chosen people see Vol. IV, pp. 26–30.

9. They which. That is, those who seek righteousness through faith.

Blessed. The blessing of righteousness came to the patriarch because he believed God, not because he was chosen to be the progenitor of the Messiah. All who believe as he did will be blessed as he was. Abraham’s faith led him to obey God (Gen. 26:5), and all who have the faith that Abraham had will likewise obey God’s voice and faithfully observe His commandments (see Gen. 26:5; see on Matt. 7:21–27).

10. As many as are of. Paul here refers to those who expect to have righteousness imputed to them as a result of their compliance with the ritual requirements of the ceremonial law. This group stands in contrast with the group of v. 9—“they which be of faith.”

Works of the law. Literally, “works of law.” See on ch. 2:16.

The curse. The law of Moses was accompanied by marvelous blessings for obedience (Deut. 28:1–14) and fearful curses for disobedience (chs. 27:15–26; 28:15–68). The slightest deviation from the requirements of the law was sufficient to incur the curse. Legalism eventually deteriorated into a laborious effort to avoid incurring the curse of the law (see on Mark 7:3). But even by avoiding the curse of the law a man could, at best, attain only to legal righteousness. He would still not necessarily have attained to a status of righteousness before God.

It is written. The form of the verb in the Greek implies not only that the following quotation was once written down as a statement expressing the divine will, but that the validity of the statement remains unaltered. Its binding force has not been diminished. The formula “It is written” was a common Jewish way of introducing a quotation from the canonical writings.

Book of the law. “The law” was the common title applied by the Jews of NT times to the writings of Moses (see on Luke 22:44). Here reference is probably to the book of Deuteronomy in particular, which was sometimes called the book of the law. The quotation is from Deut. 27:26, where it appears in a negative form: “he that confirmeth not.” Paul makes it positive: “as many as are of the works of the law.” Compare on Rom. 2:7. Those who turn their backs on God’s plan of salvation through faith can never meet the minimum requirements of the law. Their efforts are doomed to failure.

11. Just shall live by faith. A citation from Hab. 2:4 (see comment there and on Rom. 1:17). Having proved that all who depend on the works of the law for salvation are under a curse (Gal. 3:10), Paul now cites Scripture to show that it is faith—not law—that brings justification. In Hab. 2:4 the statement means that the upright, humble man will go forward in faith, trusting the wisdom and providence of God—in contrast with the proud man whose “soul ... is lifted up” and who doubts the wisdom and justice of God’s

dealings with men (see on vs. 1, 4). In other words, the man who *is* just *will* exercise faith. When Paul quotes Habakkuk, however, he does so to prove that the man who exercises faith will, as a result of his faith, be considered just (see Gal. 3:6–9). Paul declares that faith is the fundamental prerequisite to acceptance with God.

12. *Not of faith.* The law does not operate on the basis of faith; it does not require faith on the part of those who practice it.

The man that doeth. This is a quotation from Lev. 18:5. Paul now appeals to the law itself to prove to his Judaizing opponents that what he teaches concerning the law is simply an affirmation of what the law says of itself. The law demanded rigid compliance with all its requirements, but provided no means whereby men could comply. Law does not and cannot enable the sinner to attain to the standard of righteousness that it exalts. In fact, all men are sinners (Rom. 3:10, 23), including those who have sought to acquire righteousness through the legal system (v. 9). All that is prescribed by the law is works, but works of law are worthless in making a sinner righteous before God. This righteous status can be attained only through faith in the covenant promises (Gal. 3:6, 14).

Live in them. That is, live a righteous life, or be accepted in God's sight as righteous. The facts were, however, that all who had ever sought perfection through the law alone had fallen short of the goal and thereby brought upon themselves "the curse" (see on v. 10).

13. *Christ hath redeemed.* The law made no provision for releasing men who had incurred its curse, and that included all who had ever sought justification by means of it. Release from the curse could be achieved only through faith in Christ. While under the tutorship of the law in OT times, all who chose to serve the Lord found salvation through faith in the promised Messiah. The law was not their savior, but only their "schoolmaster" (see v. 24) to lead them to the Saviour and to help them understand the provisions Heaven had made for their salvation. In and of itself the law was good, for God Himself had ordained it. But it was altogether without power to save anyone from his sins.

The curse. See on v. 10.

Made a curse. Our Lord Himself was "made under the law" (ch. 4:4) in order to be able to "redeem them that were under the law" (v. 5). His death upon the cross atoned for "the transgressions that were under the first testament" (Heb. 9:15) as well as those since the cross. Accordingly, He took upon Himself "the curse" incurred by those who, though living "under the law," looked forward in faith to the atonement He would one day provide.

For us. See on Isa. 53:4–6.

It is written. The quotation is from Deut. 21:23. "It is written" was the common Jewish way of introducing a quotation from Scripture (see Matt. 2:5; Luke 2:23; etc.).

Cursed. The curse here referred to is not the same as "the curse" of v. 10 and the first part of v. 13. A criminal hanged by impalement, that is, by being transfixed on a sharp pole—the usual Jewish method of crucifixion—was considered under the curse of both God and man. In fact, this extreme manner of execution was a public display of the utter contempt in which he was held because of his crime.

Hangeth on a tree. The fact that Jesus was crucified, though in the Roman manner, reflected the opinion of the Jews and their leaders that He was accursed in God's sight as

well as in their own. With this in mind, Paul quotes Deut. 21:23 to illustrate the fact that Jesus died under “the curse of the law” (see on Gal. 3:10).

14. Blessing of Abraham. That is, the blessing promised to Abraham. This was the covenant blessing of salvation through Jesus Christ (see on vs. 8, 9).

Come on the Gentiles. That is, become available to the Gentiles (see on v. 8).

Through Jesus Christ. Israel’s dereliction of duty had rather effectively prevented the Gentiles from receiving the blessing God intended them to obtain through the witness of the chosen people (see Vol. IV, pp. 30–33). This was, at first, because the latter adopted heathen religious practices, and later because they erected what amounted to an impermeable wall of partition between themselves and the Gentiles. It was only through Christ that the gospel blessing of salvation promised to Abraham became freely available to all men.

We. Paul here considers himself one with the Gentiles, as in v. 13 he speaks as a Jew.

The promise. Receiving “the promise of the Spirit” is probably equivalent to receiving “the blessing of Abraham ... through Jesus Christ” (see on vs. 2, 5). The Galatians had received the promised Spirit (Gal. 3:2; cf. John 16:7–14). Because the promise of the Spirit is received through faith (Gal. 3:2, 3), Gentiles are as eligible as Jews.

15. After the manner of men. That is, to use a human illustration, one taken from common civil relations between man and man (cf. Rom. 6:19).

Covenant. Gr. *diathēkē*, generally in the NT and in the papyri “will,” or “testament,” meaning a unilaterally formulated plan or arrangement that the other party might accept or reject, but could not alter. The word for a compact, or agreement, in which two parties come together on equal terms was *sunthēkē*, a word that does not occur in the NT, however. Paul here uses *diathēkē*, “man’s covenant”—“will,” or “testament”—to illustrate God’s “covenant” with Abraham (Gen. 15; Gal 3:6–9, 16–18). God ordained the provisions of that “covenant”; Abraham accepted them by faith and obeyed them.

Confirmed. That is, ratified, made binding, agreed to. Once an agreement has been formally accepted by those who enter into it, its provisions are legally binding and cannot be changed except by mutual consent. If the provisions of a human agreement are considered thus binding, Paul argues, would God capriciously alter His promise to Abraham to save men on the basis of their faith in the coming Messiah (see Gal. 3:6–9, 14; see on Gal. 3:16; Heb. 6:17, 18)?

Disannulleth. Or, “revokes,” “cancels.”

16. Promises. These promises included a son to be his heir (Gen. 15:4), possession of the literal land of Canaan (v. 18), the prospect of becoming a great nation (chs. 12:2; 15:5), progenitorship of the Messiah (Gal. 3:16), and the privilege of being God’s chosen instrument to proclaim salvation to the nations of earth (Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:8, 14). These promises were repeated to Abraham upon several different occasions, over a space of nearly half a century (see Gen. 12:1–4, 7; 13:15, 16; 15:4, 5, 13–18; 17:1–8, 16–21; 18:10; 22:17, 18).

To seeds, as of many. That is, to all Abraham’s descendants.

Thy seed. The objective of God’s covenant with Abraham was the coming of the Messiah and the salvation of men. All the other promises were accessory to this. Great blessings were in store for the chosen people if they would cooperate with God (see Vol.

IV, pp. 26–30), but unfortunately they failed to do so (pp. 30–33). Accordingly, they forfeited their role as the instrument of Heaven for the salvation of the world. Nevertheless, God overruled their failure to the extent that the Messiah came to earth in the fullness of time, as a Son of Abraham (see Vol. IV, p. 32).

Originally, the promise of posterity pointed forward in a literal sense to Isaac (see references cited above under “promises”; chs. 4:22, 23). But here, by inspiration, the apostle Paul points to a figurative truth deeper than that which the promise appeared, on the surface, to embrace (see on Deut. 18:15). The promise thus met its first and partial fulfillment in Isaac, but was to have a final and complete fulfillment in Christ. In here declaring that Christ was, in a special sense, the “seed” promised to Abraham, Paul does not excluded either Abraham’s lineal descendants through Isaac (see Gal. 4:23) or his spiritual descendants through Christ (see ch. 3:29). Accordingly, the promise met its supreme, but not exclusive, fulfillment in Christ.

17. Covenant, that was confirmed. Paul here alludes to God’s assurances to Abraham of the certain fulfillment of the covenant promise concerning a “seed” (see on Gen. 15:13, 16; 22:15–17; Gal 3:16; Heb. 6:13–18).

In Christ. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of these words.

The law. That is, the entire legal system under which Israel was constituted a theocracy at Mt. Sinai, including the moral law, which was proclaimed by God in person, and the ceremonial system promulgated through Moses.

Four hundred and thirty years. See Vol. I, p. 184. This period spans the interval from God’s original call to Abraham, to the establishment of Israel as a nation at the time of the Exodus (see on Gen. 12:3, 4; see on Ex. 12:40). This was the time of sojourn, first in Canaan and then in Egypt, between the promise to make of the Hebrews a nation and to establish them in the land of Canaan, and the fulfillment of that promises. Paul is here concerned particularly with the covenant promise at the beginning of the period and the giving of the law at its close, the law under which Israel was to function as a theocracy until the crucifixion (see DA 737, 738).

Cannot disannul. See on v. 15.

Make the promise. The legal system ordained by God at Mt. Sinai (see p. 933; see on ch. 2:16) cannot replace, or in any wise alter, the provisions of the covenant (see on ch. 3:15). Specifically, “the law” did not provide a new means of salvation; it did not establish a system of righteousness by works to take the place of, or to compete with, the promise of righteousness by faith in the coming Messiah (vs. 6–8, 14). Accordingly, men were saved by faith between Sinai and the cross. For the relation of the law to the covenant see on v. 19.

18. The inheritance. That is, the promises of the covenant (see on v. 16). In a material sense this refers to the land of Canaan; in an ethnic sense, to Israel’s role as God’s chosen people; and in a spiritual sense, to the blessings of salvation through the Messiah. Although it is true of the first two that their basis was the covenant promise and not the law, Paul is here concerned more particularly with “the inheritance” of salvation by faith in Christ. In other words, God gave and they received “the inheritance” by virtue of their faith in God’s covenant promise, and not by their promise to fulfill the requirements of the legal system (see on Ex. 19:5, 8).

The law. Literally, “law” (see on Rom 2:12; Gal. 2:16).

No more of promise. That is, on the basis of the promises incorporated into the covenant made with Abraham (see on vs. 16, 17).

By promise. The record is clear. The inheritance came by promise, not by law. Abraham had nothing but God's promise. His literal descendants were accorded the status of being God's chosen people and were given possession of Canaan by virtue of that promise. It is true that they were to retain their status and possession of Canaan only if they complied with the law, but they did not *earn* title to their inheritance. Title was theirs only by virtue of faith in the promise; their fitness to retain that title was to be measured by their compliance with the will of God as expressed in "the law" (see Vol. IV, p. 34). Thus it is with the inheritance of salvation in this life (see on Heb. 5:9) and with the eternal inheritance of the saints in heavenly Canaan.

19. Wherefore then? This passage and Paul's whole line of reasoning from here onward through v. 25 have sometimes been mistakenly interpreted to mean that all the divinely revealed codes of laws in the OT ended with Calvary. Growing out of this interpretation is the view that in the pre-Christian era men were saved by the keeping of the law, and in the Christian Era by grace through faith. But such a view is contrary to the whole body of Scripture. God has had only one means of saving man, from Adam onward; that is, by faith in the sacrifice of our Lord. The good news of that salvation has been proclaimed to man in all ages (see Heb. 4:2). Paul has elsewhere emphatically repudiated the idea that he felt some might hastily and mistakenly draw from his writings, that grace and the gospel abolished law: "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid" (Rom. 3:31).

It is evident, therefore, that whatever Paul is teaching in Gal. 3:19–25 he is not teaching the doctrine of a pre-Christian era of salvation by law versus a Christian Era of salvation by grace. What he is truly teaching becomes evident when two points are kept clearly in mind. First, to all Jews and those trained in the Jewish viewpoint, as were the Galatians under the Judaizing teachers, the beginnings and the heart of God's whole revealed religion for His chosen people were the series of events at Sinai. It was at Sinai that God most literally called them out for His own and made them His peculiar people, His holy nation. The distinctive mark of that initial experience at Sinai was the announcing to Israel of the great moral code that was ever to be the standard of their lives, plus (a) civil statutes that were an interpretation and application of the moral code to the Jewish state and (b) certain statutes that were to govern the symbolic ritual of sacrifices and offerings pointing forward to the great sacrifice of Christ. The Lord had told the Israelites at Sinai that if they would be obedient to all His laws, they would eat the good of the land and be His people forever. They mistakenly thought that they were able of themselves to give such obedience, and that therefore their hope of acceptance by God and of receiving an inheritance forever lay in their own efforts at keeping these laws.

The second point that must be remembered, if we are rightly to understand vs. 19–25, is this: Paul has just declared to the Galatians that long before Sinai, Abraham had received the inheritance simply by believing the promise of God, and he has emphatically added, in order to illustrate again the main premise of his epistle, that salvation is by faith alone, that nothing that happened "four hundred and thirty years after" Abraham could change the terms by which he was assured of the inheritance. Paul's reasoning is summed up in the words: "For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise" (v. 18).

Now, to all those steeped in the Jewish viewpoint, this reasoning of Paul would seem to make pointless and meaningless the awesome drama of Sinai—the great codes of law, and the declaration of God that if they would obey these laws they would eat the good of the land. In other words, Paul’s readers would immediately ask, “Wherefore then serveth the law?”

Added. Gr. *prostithēmi*, literally, “to place alongside,” “to append.” And why was the law “added” if the Abrahamic covenant was adequate to salvation? The answer is: “Because of transgressions.” The difference between the times before Sinai and those afterward was not a difference as regards the existence of great laws from God, but as regards the explicit revelation of them—at Sinai there was a concrete presentation of the moral law in two tables of stone and of other laws in “the book of the law.” But in the centuries before Sinai God’s patriarchs possessed, in some marked measure, the moral law written in their hearts, and were thus conscious of God’s high moral standards (see Gen. 17:9; 18:19; 26:5). They also possessed, in embryo, the laws of sacrificial ritual. During the long, dark bondage in Egypt, where they dwelt amid the blackest paganism and the most depraved immorality, they well-nigh lost their understanding or awareness of God’s moral standards, and of even the most rudimentary ideas of sacrifices. And when men come to such a state, they are insensitive to sin, for it is by “the law” that we have the knowledge of sin. As Paul declares elsewhere, “I had not known sin, but by the law” (Rom. 7:7).

When God took Israel out of the darkness and defilement of Egypt, His first contact with them was in terms of a presentation of the moral laws that are the standard of His government, and of the ceremonial statutes designed to provide Israel with a pattern of ritual service that would make the promised sacrifice of our Lord most clear to them. The law “was added because of transgressions” (Gal. 3:19), “that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful” (Rom. 7:13). It was only by having God’s moral law brought into sharp objective focus that the Israelites, sadly adapted as they were to the gross viewpoint of the Egyptians, could be made conscious that they were sinners, and thus needed salvation. And it was because the ceremonial statutes were presented in clear detail that the Israelites were enabled to see the way God had devised to save them from their sins. Compare on Eph. 2:15.

Till the seed should come. That is, till Christ should come (see on vs. 16, 24).

To whom the promise was made. Or, “with respect to whom the promise was made.”

Ordained by angels. The Exodus record is silent concerning the presence of angels at Sinai. According to Deut. 33:2 there were “ten thousands of saints [literally, “holy ones”]” present at the giving of the law. In the LXX the last clause of that verse reads, “On his right hand [were his] angels with him” (cf. Ps. 68:17). Stephen (Acts 7:53) and Paul (Heb. 2:2) both speak of angels as participating in the giving of the Mosaic code (cf. PP 364).

Mediator. Or, “arbitrator,” “middleman,” one who intervenes between two parties to reconcile divergent views or interests, or who brings them together in a compact. In v. 20 Paul makes clear his purpose in mentioning the mediate, or indirect, way in which the ceremonial law was given. Being given through a mediator, Moses (see Ex. 20:19; 21:1), the ceremonial and civil laws came from God indirectly. The covenant and its promises, however, were given to Abraham directly, without the assistance of a human mediator.

20. Not a mediator of one. Literally, “not of one,” that is, a mediator does not represent one person only. Mediation presupposes two or more parties, with the middleman representing the interests of both. The people of Israel dealt with Moses in the ratification of the old covenant and in the implementation of the series of statutes that accompanied it.

God is one. The relation of this statement to its context is not clear, a fact reflected in the more than 250 different explanations that commentators and others have given it. The context precludes considering it a restatement of Deut. 6:4, “The Lord our God is one Lord,” and suggests that Paul here refers back to the covenant promise mentioned in Gal. 3:18. The entire chapter deals with the difference between salvation by faith in the covenant promise and salvation by the “works of the law.” The “but” in v. 20 implies a contrast between the law of vs. 19 and 20, and the covenant promise of v. 18. The covenant promise was not “added” to anything; it was delivered by God Himself. Accordingly, v. 20 might be paraphrased as follows: “Now a mediator implies an agreement between two parties, but the covenant promise was unilateral—it was contingent upon God alone and thus required no mediator.” Whereas the old covenant (see on Eze. 16:60) was in the form of a contract between God and the chosen people, mediated by Moses (see Ex. 19:3–8; 20:19–21; 21:1; 24:3–8; see on Gal. 3:15, 19), the new, or everlasting, covenant vouchsafed by God to Abraham was simply in the form of a promise. With the old covenant there was an agreement on the part of the people to obey, whereas with the new covenant it is necessary only to accept the promise by faith, and obedience follows naturally (Gen. 26:5).

21. Against the promises. The law appears to be incompatible with the covenant. It may even seem to have replaced the promise of salvation by faith with a program of salvation by works.

Of God. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for the omission of this phrase.

God forbid. Perish the thought! Such a thing could never be. God was the author of both “the law” and the “promises,” and He would not repudiate His unconditional promise of salvation by faith in Christ (see Heb. 6:17–20)! To do so would be a denial of His integrity as God. It would prove Him inconsistent and unreliable.

Have given life. The law was never intended to impart righteousness and provide eternal life (see on v. 19). Only through Christ can men have access to righteousness, the more abundant life in the present, and in the world to come, life eternal (Luke 18:30).

Verily righteousness. Had it been possible to attain righteousness by the “works of the law” (see on ch. 2:16), the covenant promise would thereby be rendered superfluous. To the carnal heart a program of righteousness by works has infinitely more appeal than God’s plan of righteousness by faith. It is always more flattering to the human ego to do something to earn righteousness, than simply to accept it by faith as a gift. To accept righteousness as a gift is an acknowledgment that there is nothing one can do to achieve it on the basis of personal merit. It injures carnal pride to accept charity, whether it be material or spiritual.

22. The scripture. The thought here is evidently drawn from Ps. 14:1–3.

All under sin. That is, the Jews, who trusted in the works of the law to save them, as well as the Gentiles (Gal. 2:15, 17; see on Rom. 3:9, 22).

The promise by faith. That is, the covenant promise of salvation by faith (see on vs. 6–9, 14).

Of Jesus. That is, in Jesus (see on ch. 1:12).

To them that believe. In other words, not to those who practice the requirements of the ritual law as a means to salvation.

23. Before faith came. That is, before the mystery of how God could save men by faith alone was clearly revealed in the incarnation, perfect life, vicarious death, and glorious resurrection of our Lord (1 Tim. 3:16; see on John 1:17; Gal. 3:14, 19; cf. on Luke 16:16). Note the emphasis on time in Gal. 3:23, 25.

Kept. Literally, “guarded,” so as to prevent escape.

Under the law. That is, under the legal system (see on ch. 2:16). “Under the law” here means to be under its jurisdiction, not its condemnation (see on Rom. 6:14).

The faith. See above under “before faith came.”

Afterwards be revealed. The faith of OT times was rewarded at the first advent of Christ (see Rom. 16:25, 26; Heb. 1:1, 2). Previous to the incarnation, the promise of a coming Redeemer required faith that God would fulfill the promise. With the coming of Jesus, faith met reality.

24. The law. That is, the entire legal system, consisting of moral, ceremonial, and civil statutes (see on ch. 2:16).

Schoolmaster. Gr. *paidagōgos*, a “tutor,” or “guardian,” of children; literally, “a leader of children,” but *not* a “teacher” (*didaskalos*). In Greek households the *paidagōgos* was a supervisor of, and companion to, boys. He accompanied them to school, protected them from harm, kept them from mischief, and had the right to discipline them. In Greek art he is generally represented with a stick in his hand. If qualified to do so, he may also have assisted them in the preparation of their lessons.

The role of the *paidagōgos* is an apt illustration (see on v. 19). “The law” served as the guardian, supervisor, or custodian of the chosen people in OT times, and like the *paidagōgos*, was charged with their moral training.

Unto Christ. That is, until Christ should come, as the context requires (vs. 19, 23). According to v. 19, “the law ... was added [to the covenant] ... till the seed [Christ, v. 16] should come” (see comment there). Or to restate the matter, Israel was “kept under the law” (v. 23) until God’s provision for salvation by faith should be “revealed” with the coming of Christ.

Paul here refers very particularly to the ceremonial system, which pointed forward to Christ (see on chs. 2:16; 3:19). It is also true that the moral law was designed of God to lead men to Christ, for it reveals to men their sins and thus their need of cleansing from sin.

25. After that faith is come. Paul here speaks of the provision for salvation by faith in Christ alone.

No longer. Note the emphasis in vs. 23, 25 on the time element—“before,” “afterwards,” “after,” “no longer.”

Under a schoolmaster. That is, under the law (v. 23; cf. v. 24). Some have interpreted this phrase to mean being “under the condemnation of law.” It is true, of course, that the words themselves could be so explained; however, such an explanation does not accord with the context and is clearly not the sense Paul here intended them to convey. It is not

the function of a “schoolmaster” to condemn, but to exercise jurisdiction, to guard, to protect (see on v. 24). Paul’s argument is in no wise concerned with the condemnation that results from lawlessness, but with the possibility of attaining righteousness by compliance with law (see vs. 1–3, 7, 11, 14, 21; etc.). See on Rom. 6:14.

We should remember that Paul is using a figure of speech, and that therefore his words should not be too closely pressed in every detail. There is one essential point that he is seeking to stress; namely, the unique significance of the important event that occurred “four hundred and thirty years after” (v. 17) Abraham—God’s formal announcement to Israel of His moral law and God’s giving to them, through Moses, civil statutes and a code governing their religious ceremonies. Holy men before Sinai had, in some degree, the moral law written in their hearts, and knew at least the rudiments of a ceremonial system. When God called Israel out of Egyptian bondage He gave objective reality to all these laws, that they might see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, as revealed by the Decalogue, and the means whereby God purposed to save them from sin, as disclosed by the ceremonial service (see on v. 19). The very laws, so distinctive of the Jewish economy, were a continuing exhibit of man’s lost state and of a divine plan for pardon. Those very laws hemmed men in, as it were, caused them to be “shut up” (v. 23), kept in custody, against a day of spiritual deliverance. Paul describes the children of God who lived before the advent as being, in figure, “under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father” (ch. 4:2). “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons” (v. 4).

And what, indeed, happened for the child of God when Christ came, as touching the matter of “the law,” which had been “our schoolmaster”? As regards the ceremonial laws, they ceased by a divine statute of limitations, for Christ’s sacrifice took the place of animal sacrifices, and thus the laws governing such sacrifices ended. As regards the civil statutes, they lost their significance for the simple reason that Israel ended as a nation, or state, and spiritual Israel took its place. As regards the moral law, the Decalogue, it no longer stands out on two tables of stone, as something apart from man. Instead, those who are “justified by faith” (v. 24) in Christ become new creatures in Christ Jesus (2 Cor. 5:17), with the law of God written in their minds and hearts (Heb. 8:10). And thus “the righteousness [or “requirements”] of the law” is “fulfilled” in them (Rom. 8:4). Rightly does Paul, employing his figure, declare that we are no longer “under a schoolmaster.” It is difficult to understand how anyone ever concluded that Paul is here announcing the abolition of the Decalogue, God’s great moral law. So long as the new hearts and minds of the children of God endure, the divine law, in living characters, is engraved upon them.

26. *Ye are all.* That is, both Jews and Gentiles (see v. 28).

Children of God. Literally, “sons of God,” having been “born again” as members of God’s family in heaven and on earth (see on Matt. 5:9; John 1:12, 13; 3:3, 5; Rom. 8:15, 16; 9:8, 26; Eph. 3:15; John 3:1, 2).

By faith. See on Rom. 1:5, 17; Gal. 3:11. Jew and Gentile alike are to be saved by faith, not by the “works of the law” (see on ch. 2:16)

27. *Baptized into Christ* See on Matt 3:6; Rom 6:3, 4.

Put on Christ. See on Rom. 13:14; cf. on Matt. 22:11. The word here translated “put on” is commonly used with reference to clothing. To “put on” Christ means to adopt His

principles, to imitate His example, to accept His guidance, to become like Him (see on 2 Cor. 5:17). Greek writers speak of putting on Plato, Socrates, etc., meaning thereby to accept them as instructors and to follow their teachings. See on Gal. 5:22, 23. To “put on Christ” implies putting off self and the old nature.

28. Jew nor Greek. That is, Jew nor Gentile (see on Rom. 1:16). Christianity subordinates the role of race and nationality to the principle of the brotherhood of all men (Acts 17:26). Here, however, Paul speaks of the standing of Jew and non-Jew before God (see on Acts 10:34; cf. on Matt. 20:15). In Christ’s kingdom all are covered with the same garment of Christ’s righteousness, which they receive by faith in Jesus Christ. But to the Judaizing Christians of Paul’s day such an idea was rank heresy. They maintained that the only way into the Christian church was through Judaism, that a Gentile must first be circumcised—become a Jew, as it were—before being accepted into the Christian communion.

Bond nor free. In the sight of God there is no difference between the soul of a slave and the soul of a free man. The slave is eligible to salvation on the same basis as the nonslave. Both may be saved by faith in Jesus. Christianity alone eliminates distinctions based on race, nationality, and social standing. Here, however, Paul is not dealing with the subject of slavery as such.

Male nor female. In the ancient world women were commonly considered as little more than chattels, and thus infinitely inferior to men. Pagan philosophers sometimes argued as to whether a woman even had a soul. In some pagan societies a father or husband had authority over the women of his household to the point of ordering their execution. The elevation of woman to equality with man is the direct result of Christian teaching and practice. Here, however, Paul is thinking of the status of women before God as sinners in need of salvation.

One in Christ. As the divine precepts of love for God and for one’s fellow men are made operative, men’s hearts are united in a close bond of fellowship, each with others, under their heavenly Father (see on Matt. 22:36–40).

29. Abraham’s seed. As a son of Abraham, Christ became, in a special sense, heir to the covenant promises (see on v. 16). By baptism we acquire kinship to Christ, and through Him acquire the right to participate in the promises made to Abraham (vs. 7–9). Concerning the importance attached by the Jews to literal descent from Abraham see on Matt. 3:9; Rom. 9:4.

Heirs. As spiritual children of Abraham, Christians become “joint-heirs with Christ” (Rom. 8:17). As Son of God, Christ is likewise heir to the honor and glory of heaven, and those who believe in Him fall heir to a position of honor in the universe that would never have been possible for created beings to enjoy had the Word not become flesh (John 1:1, 14). At the incarnation, divinity and humanity were united by ties never to be broken (DA 21, 25, 26). As heirs with Abraham to the covenant promises, all who emulate his lofty example of faith will enter the “city which hath foundations,” to which he himself ever looked forward in faith (Heb. 11:10). See on Gal. 3:9, 14.

The promise. That is, the “promise” of God to Abraham to justify both Jews and Gentiles on the basis of faith alone, without the “works” of “the law” (see on vs. 8, 14, 16).

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1–4FE 196
 1–5AA384
 2 AA 208
 7 DA 556; PP 153
 8 DA 193; PP 154, 370
 13 DA 741; PP 63; SR 225
 16 AA 222; PP 169, 370
 26 AA 208
 27 3T 365; 4T 41; 6T 97
 28 COL 386; DA 403; PP 370; 7T 225
 29 PP 170

CHAPTER 4

1 *We were under the law till Christ came, as the heir is under his guardian till he be of age.*
 5 *But Christ freed us from the law: 7 therefore we are servants no longer to it.* 14 *He*
remembereth their good will to him, and his to them, 22 and sheweth that we are the sons
of Abraham by the freewoman.

1. The heir. This chapter amplifies and illustrates the truth stated in ch. 3:17–29 by two analogies—the heir (ch. 4:1–9) and the two sons (vs. 21–31)—separated by a hortatory and biographical parenthesis (vs. 10–20). Here the heir (cf. ch. 3:29) represents all the spiritual seed of Abraham (see ch. 3:7–9, 26–29).

A child. An heir may be a child, but that makes him no less an heir. In due time he will receive custody of his father’s property. As a child, he has a right to it, but not authority over it. Whether Paul here represents the father of the heir as still living or as already deceased is not clear, nor does it matter. As the context makes evident (vs. 2–7), the childhood, or period of minority, represents the status of Israel as a people while living “under the law” (ch. 3:17–19, 23–25).

A servant. Literally, “a slave.” Until the heir comes of age he has no more authority over the inheritance he has received than as though he were one of his father’s slaves. He is placed under the supervision of a guardian (cf. ch. 3:24), whom he is required to obey. Lacking maturity of understanding and judgment, he does not enjoy the freedom that will be his upon reaching manhood. Thus it was with the Jews under the legal system. Coming out of Egypt, the Israelites proved to be incredibly dull and foolish, and advanced but little throughout their history as a nation (see Ex. 32:9, 10; Ex. 33:3; Eze. 20:1–38; Mal. 1:6; 3:7; Matt. 21:33–43; 23:29–38; Vol. IV, pp. 30–33). “The law” (see on Gal. 2:16) God gave them when they came out of Egypt was adapted to their capacity to understand. The elementary provisions of the ceremonial system were designed to enable them to comprehend the fundamental principles of the plan of salvation and to lead them to appropriate its blessings (see on ch. 3:19, 24). It was God’s purpose that under such tutorship they should reach spiritual maturity (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–28) and inherit all the promises made to Abraham (pp. 28–30; see on ch. 3:6–8, 14).

Lord of all. Paul seems to imply that the heir is now approaching young manhood and is eager, perhaps impatient, to gain control of his inheritance. But he is still a minor and has no more jurisdiction over it than if he were his father’s slave.

2. Tutors. Literally, “guardians [of minor children].”

Governors. Or, “household managers,” “stewards,” “trustees.” Paul here stresses the utter dependence of an heir during his minority. He is kept under constant surveillance to

prevent him from wasting his inheritance (cf. Luke 15:11–32). In OT times God placed Israel under the guardianship of the legal system, which was intended to point them forward to the coming Messiah and to lead them to have faith in Him (see on Gal. 3:19).

Time appointed. That is, for the receiving of the inheritance, as stipulated by the father. Presumably, this was when the heir reached his majority. Paul here refers to the time when Israel was to have entered into the full enjoyment of its covenant privileges (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–30; see on chs. 3:19, 24; 4:4).

3. We. Paul here speaks as a Jew (see on ch. 2:15). When he again addresses the Galatians he uses the pronoun “ye” (ch. 4:8–21). Finally, he speaks of himself as one with the Galatians (ch. 4:27–31; cf. on ch. 2:15, 17).

When we were children. That is, prior to the cross.

In bondage. Or, “in slavery to.” Throughout OT times the Jews were subject to “the law” (see on ch. 2:16) as a slave is subject to his master. God required them to comply with its precepts as a minor is expected to obey his guardians. How strange that the “foolish” Galatians aspired to return to that state of bondage (chs. 3:1; 4:9; 5:1). They could never find freedom from condemnation, which was all the law had to offer (ch. 3:13). Any today who trust to their own efforts for salvation are in the same state of bondage as the Jews of OT times and as the Galatians while subject to the Judaizers (see p. 933). Any self-imposed duty, or one demanded by ecclesiastical authority, results in spiritual bondage if it takes the place of faith in God and submission to His will.

Elements. Gr. *stoicheia*, at first meaning, “things arranged in rows”; later, “the alphabet,” because its letters were written in a row—the A B C’s. In a literal sense *stoicheia* came to mean the basic elements of which the world and the universe are composed (as in 2 Peter 3:10, 12); in a cosmological sense, the spirit beings of the universe (cf. Col. 2:15); and in a metaphorical sense, the rudiments of knowledge (Gal. 4:3, 9; Col. 2:8, 20). The words “even so” equate the statement of Gal. 4:3 with that of v. 2, and thus the “elements of the world” of v. 3 with the “tutors and governors” of v. 2 (see comment there). Paul here refers to the ceremonial system as a primer on religion and its precepts as elementary instruction concerning the plan of salvation. “The law” (see on ch. 2:16) was thus only the A B C’s of revealed truth, adapted to the understanding of spiritual children (see on chs. 3:24; 4:1). From Paul’s point of view the ceremonial system and its requirements now appeared childish, “weak,” and “beggarly” (v. 9). The ceremonial institutions were given by God to a very illiterate people, who had just come out of slavery. The sanctuary services were simplified so that their meaning could be comprehended. God never intended that the Jews should be satisfied with this elementary approach to the great theme of redemption. The services and sacrifices were but shadows, or symbols. They were never intended to take the place of true confession and forsaking of sin (see Col. 2:17; Heb. 10:1, 4).

World. Gr. *kosmos*, here probably meaning the “world” of humanity, as in John 3:16, 17, 19; Rom. 5:12; 11:12; etc. The phrase “elements of the world” might thus be rendered, “rudimentary religious principles for the human race.”

4. Fulness of the time. The exact time for the coming of the Messiah had been foretold by the prophets (see on Dan. 9:24, 25). In the councils of heaven the time for this event had been predetermined (see Acts 17:26). Not only did the Messiah come at the time indicated in Daniel’s prophecy, He came at the most favorable time in all history.

The world was at peace, under one government. Travel by land and sea was relatively safe and expeditious. There was a universal language, Greek. The Scriptures had been available in Greek—the LXX—for about two hundred years. Men were dissatisfied with their religious beliefs and were longing for the truth about life and human destiny. The Jews were dispersed everywhere, and in spite of themselves, bore witness to the true God. From all parts of the world they came to attend the feasts at Jerusalem, and could carry with them, as they returned, news of the Messiah's coming (see Vol. V, pp. 59–63; DA 31–38). Providence could have appointed no place and time more auspicious for launching the gospel message to the world than Palestine at this period of history.

The word “fulness” also implies that all events foretold as preceding the advent had been, or were on the point of being, fulfilled. God is perfect in wisdom and knowledge, and we have reason to believe that all events in His great cosmic plan will move in exact order and at the appointed times (cf. DA 32). This precision is evident throughout creation, from the movement of the heavenly orbs to the structure of the smallest atom. There is no valid basis for doubting that the same precision is true of God's great plan to save mankind.

Sent forth his Son. Paul here implies the pre-existence of Jesus. Jesus frequently referred to His previous existence with God (John 16:28; etc.). In His prayer to the Father He spoke of the glory that had been His before the world was created (John 17:5; see on ch. 1:1–3, 14).

Made of a woman. This clearly indicates the humanity of Jesus, and with the previous declaration, sets forth His divine-human nature. He was both Son of man and Son of God, a great truth proclaimed also by the holy prophets of old (see Isa. 7:14; 9:6, 7).

Under the law. See on ch. 2:16. As a Jew, Jesus complied with the requirements of “the law,” in so far as they were applicable to Him, a sinless being (see Matt. 17:24–27; Luke 2:21–38; cf. Matt. 23:1–3).

5. To redeem. Literally, “to buy up.” The immediate context suggests that Paul is thinking particularly of buying out from “bondage,” or slavery, those who were under “tutors and governors” (see on vs. 2, 3). Along with the more important work of redeeming men from sin, Christ's fulfillment of the types of the ceremonial system also released the Jews from further obligation to that system and from “the curse” that came upon all who ever sought salvation through compliance with its requirements (see on ch. 3:10, 13).

Under the law. Literally, “under law” (see on Rom. 2:12; Gal. 2:16). That Paul does not have in mind being under the condemnation of the moral law is evident from ch. 4:21. No one would ever “desire” to be under the condemnation of the Decalogue. Reference can be only to the jurisdiction of the Jewish legal system (see on Rom. 6:14).

We. Paul here speaks again as a Jew (see on v. 3). The Gentile believers had never been “under the law” in the sense here intended.

Adoption of sons. Or, “adoption as sons.” The Jews ceased to be immature children when they, by faith, accepted Jesus as the promised Messiah (see on John 1:12, 13). Faith in Him released them from dependence on the types of the ceremonial system and gave them full rights as heirs to the promised inheritance (Gal. 4:1–3; cf. ch. 3:6–9, 14, 16, 24). Prior to the coming of faith (see on vs. 23–25) the Jews were potential but not actual heirs.

6. *Ye are sons.* Paul here addresses the Galatians directly. Though Gentiles, they had yielded to the spurious gospel of the Judaizers (ch. 1:6–8) and become entangled in the “yoke of bondage” (ch. 5:1), the Jewish legal system (ch. 4:9, 21), from which God had released even Jewish Christians (see on ch. 3:24, 25). Perhaps, also, some of the Galatian believers were Jews, and had been lured back into legalism by the Judaizers. But whether Jew or Gentile, the Galatians had become sons of God through faith (ch. 3:2, 6–9, 14). For them to return to the symbols of the ceremonial law that pointed forward to the very experience they were already enjoying, in fellowship with the risen Saviour, would be to deny the reality and validity of that experience (see on 1 John 3:1, 2).

The Spirit. See on John 14:16–18; 16:6–11.

Into your hearts. The Galatians had experienced the “earnest” of the Spirit (see on 2 Cor. 1:22), who had confirmed their acceptance as sons of God.

Abba, Father. See on Rom. 8:15.

7. *No more a servant.* See on v. 1. It is the Spirit who gives this assurance. Being a member of God’s family, the believer may now, as a son and heir, approach God. He may do so in the full assurance of the Father’s solicitous interest. Under the influence of the Judaizers the Galatians were ignoring the significance and value of the freedom God had so generously provided in Jesus Christ. Compare the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11–32).

An heir. See on chs. 3:29; 4:1.

8. *When ye knew not God.* Paul now apparently addresses himself particularly to the Gentile members of the Galatian churches, and reminds them of their experience before becoming Christians. God had not revealed Himself to them, nor had He given them His law. This did not mean that they had been altogether without any knowledge of God (see Rom. 1:18–21), but God had given a special revelation of Himself to the Jews, who thereby had enjoyed a distinct advantage (see Rom. 3:1, 2). God had “winked” at the former comparative ignorance of the Gentiles (Acts 17:30).

Are no gods. They were idols, or false gods, and thus really not gods at all (see 1 Cor. 8:4; cf. ch. 10:20). Before they learned of Christ, the Gentiles had been in bondage to their gods. This was not true of Jewish Christians, for they had not been worshiping idols when they learned of Christ.

9. *But now.* The Gentile Galatian believers were no longer in ignorance (cf. Acts 17:30), and were really without excuse.

Known God. The Greek implies more than mental perception. They had entered into a personal, experimental knowledge of God. They had enjoyed a working knowledge of salvation.

Rather. Paul hastens to avoid any possibility that the Galatians should pride themselves on knowing the true God. They had no reason to take credit to themselves. After all, salvation consists in God’s search for man, not in man’s search for God (John 3:16; see on Luke 15:2, 4).

Known of God. They had become objects of His favorable attention. It is true that Jesus came to seek and to save all who are lost (Luke 19:10), but on the other hand, God is found only by those who seek for Him diligently (Jer. 29:13).

How turn ye? Earnestly hoping to pierce the foggy thinking of the Galatians, bewitched as they are, Paul addresses them directly, in a sense interrupting the logical flow of his argument. The present tense implies that the process of turning is still going

on. They have not yet completely turned. The Gr. *epistrephō*, “to turn,” is commonly translated “to convert” or “to be converted” (see Mark 4:12; Luke 22:32; John 12:40; Acts 3:19).

Weak and beggarly elements. See on v. 3. They had been liberated from bond service to the crude, rudimentary concepts and practices of heathenism. Now they were rushing back into a form of bondage hardly better than that from which they had been set free by the gospel. Each of these systems was a futile attempt to attain righteousness by works. Had the Galatians abandoned the rites and ceremonies of heathenism only that they might adopt those of Judaism? For practical purposes Judaism had degenerated into a system of external observances, in some respects hardly distinguishable from those of the heathen religious (see Vol. IV, pp. 32, 33). “The law” (see on ch. 2:16) was “weak” in that it had no power to save even its most ardent devotees, and it was “beggarly,” or poor, in that it lacked the vital spark of life. Furthermore, the Jews had added so many traditions to “the law” that its original purpose had been obscured, and it had become a burden to those who sought to meet its requirements as a means of earning salvation (see on Mark 7:3). The Galatians were giving up all the benefits of the gospel and receiving nothing in return.

Ye desire. Their conversion to Judaism was voluntary. They seemed to be eager to exchange their priceless freedom for the penury of bondage!

Bondage. See on v. 3.

10. Ye observe. The Greek implies scrupulous care.

Days, and months. Paul here refers to the seven ceremonial sabbaths and the new moons of the ceremonial system (see Lev. 23; Num. 10:10; 28:11–15). There is no basis in Scripture for assuming, as some do, that the “days” of which Paul here speaks refer to the seventh-day Sabbath. Nowhere in the Bible is the seventh day referred to in the language here used. Furthermore, the seventh-day Sabbath was instituted at creation (see on Gen. 2:1–3; cf. on Ex. 20:8–11), before the entrance of sin and some 2,500 years before the inauguration of the ceremonial system at Mt. Sinai. If observance of the seventh-day Sabbath subjects a man to bondage, it must be that the Creator Himself entered into bondage when He observed the world’s first Sabbath! And that conclusion is unthinkable.

Times. Literally, “appointed seasons,” here, the annual set festivals of the Jewish religious calendar (see on Num. 28:2).

Years. The sabbatical year and the year of jubilee (see Ex. 23:10, 11; Lev. 25:8–12).

11. Afraid of you. Rather, “afraid for you,” or “afraid about you.” It seemed incredible that the Galatians could be so easily turned from freedom back to bondage. Could it be that they really understood what they were doing and proposed to go ahead anyway? From any point of view their course of action did not make sense.

Labour in vain. If Paul’s self-sacrificing efforts on their behalf (vs. 13, 14) were to result only in the exchange of one kind of bondage for another, those efforts were indeed wasted!

12. I beseech you. Or, “I beg of you.” Paul now turns from argument to entreaty.

Be as I am. Paul had once been a Jew, zealously devoted to the legal system as only a dyed-in-the-wool, bigoted Pharisee could be (Acts 26:5). But he had given up the legal system, once so dear to him, and had, for practical purposes, become a Gentile in order that he might win the Gentiles to Christ (1 Cor. 9:20–23; 10:32, 33). Why should the

Gentile Galatians now adopt Judaism? If he had given it up for their sakes, could they not give it up for him?

I am as ye are. Where principle was not involved, Paul had conformed to Gentile customs. His manner of life among them had been exemplary.

Not injured me. Or, “not wronged me.” The form of the verb in Greek links this declaration with vs. 13–15 rather than directly with v. 12. The statement is a figure of speech affirming the excellent treatment the Galatians had accorded Paul upon the occasion of his first visit among them. They are not to misconstrue the tone of his letter (see chs. 1:6–9; 3:1–4; 4:10, 11; etc.) as reflecting a personal complaint against them. He had no grievance whatever about the way they had treated him, for the spirit they had manifested was most commendable (vs. 13–15). No doubt Paul also sought to rekindle their former spirit of devotion and readiness to follow his teaching. At first they had heeded his every suggestion; why not now also?

13. Through infirmity. Or, “because of infirmity.” Apparently Paul had not planned to evangelize Galatia at that time, but had been compelled to remain there for a time because of ill health. It has been suggested that he had contracted malaria or some other disease in the lowlying coastal area and had sought the higher altitude of the interior in the hope of finding relief. Possibly this “infirmity” was the “thorn in the flesh” of which he speaks in his Corinthian letter, and about which he prayed so earnestly (see 2 Cor. 12:7–9).

At the first. This may or may not indicate more than one previous visit to the Galatians. It is generally thought that the first of two previous visits is referred to. According to the so-called South Galatian theory (see p. 932; Additional Note on Acts 16), this would be the visit of Acts 13:14 to 14:21. However, nothing in the account of that journey suggests that Paul was in ill health at the time. According to the North Galatian theory, this would be the journey of Acts 16:1–6. The brevity of the account of the latter journey leaves more possibility for illness at that time. If the North Galatian theory is accepted, the statement of Gal. 4:13 may be considered as an allusion to the visits Paul made in Galatia on his second and third missionary journeys, with specific reference to that of the second journey. See on Acts 16:6.

14. My temptation. Textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the reading “your temptation.” This would mean that Paul’s infirmities were a temptation to the Galatians to reject him. The context tends to favor this reading, as does also Paul’s habitual attitude toward suffering (see 2 Cor. 4:8–11; 12:9, 10). The reading “my temptation” would reflect a tendency on Paul’s part to cease laboring because of his bodily “infirmity,” whatever it was.

Despised not, nor rejected. Paul’s affliction might have given the Galatians an excuse for treating him with contempt. In ancient times an affliction was commonly considered a direct punishment from God for some gross sin (cf. Acts 28:4). It would have been natural for the Galatians to conclude that Paul had offended the gods, and to regard his message as of little value. But they did not do so. Their response, under circumstances that could conceivably have led them to turn against him, had been wholeheartedly favorable. What reason—personal or otherwise—could they possibly have for turning against Paul now? Their former conduct testified against their present attitude.

As Christ Jesus. They could not have accorded Paul more favorable treatment. Their gracious hospitality had left nothing to be desired.

15. Blessedness. “What has become of your rejoicing?” Their changed attitude has not brought added satisfaction. Hope in the power of Christ they have exchanged for their own works. There is no joy or satisfaction that can equal that which comes from the experience of a life completely surrendered to Jesus Christ (cf. on Matt. 11:28–30).

Plucked out. There could have been no more convincing proof of their devotion to Paul. There was nothing too great or too hard for them to do for him. From this, some have concluded that Paul’s eyes were the cause of his great distress (see v. 14). Such was, indeed, the nature of Paul’s permanent affliction, though this statement alone would not be sufficient evidence of the fact (see EGW Supplementary Material on 2 Cor. 12:7–9).

16. Your enemy. Paul was telling them the truth now no less than upon that former occasion (cf. ch. 1:8, 9). He has not changed; his gospel has not changed. Why should their attitude toward him have changed? Now he seeks to set them free from bondage to Judaism, as formerly he had liberated them from bondage to heathenism (see on ch. 4:9). Paul was actually their best friend, willing even to risk the loss of their friendship in the attempt to rescue them from “the weak and beggarly elements” of Judaism (v. 9). “Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful” (Prov. 27:6).

Paul’s appeal to the Galatians apparently had a beneficial effect (cf. AA 388). The fact that the Galatians preserved his letter testifies to the fact that they responded to his appeal and treasured it as the instrument of their salvation. This fact suggests their appreciation for his interest in them and their acceptance of the truth he again brought to their minds.

17. Zealously affect you. Or, “avidly pursue you.” The Judaizers were feigning a great interest in the welfare of the Galatians and were apparently making much over them, in order to win them to their views concerning Judaism and circumcision. They wanted the Galatians as their followers. Apparently considerable pressure had been brought to bear by these leaders. We cannot avoid condemning their motives, but we can commend their zeal (see on Luke 16:8).

Lack of enthusiasm on the part of Christians is often responsible for the lack of interest shown by non-Christians in the teachings of the church. If we were genuinely in earnest, our zeal would be spontaneous. Spasmodic, forced, or artificial attempts to represent our religion, from a sense of duty, make little impression. Superficial enthusiasm betrays itself in time. The best testimony in behalf of religious beliefs is their demonstration in a life wholly consecrated to the principles they reflect. It is the life that counts.

Not well. Their motives were suspect (see below under “affect them”).

Exclude you. Probably from Paul’s solicitous attentions and from his gospel. The statement may also refer to the wishes of the Judaizers to exclude the Galatians from church membership until they had been circumcised. Possibly, also, these wily men intended to shut them off from contact with other churches that were loyal to Paul, in the hope of making Galatia the center of their activities among the Gentiles.

Affect them. The true motive of the Judaizers in centering so much attention on the Galatians was that they themselves might become the center of attention among the Galatians. This they expected in return for their pretended interest in the welfare of the church.

18. Zealously affected. Zeal itself is to be commended if it reflects worthy motives. At one time Paul had commended the Corinthians for their zeal because it had encouraged others to good deeds (2 Cor. 9:2). His own former zeal for Judaism had led him to persecute the Christian church (Phil. 3:6). The Galatians had apparently mistaken their zeal in their new course as evidence of the genuineness of their zeal, unaware that zeal can never be a substitute for sanctified, straight thinking. The zeal of Judaism and the Judaizers was not according to knowledge (Rom. 10:2). Paul was greatly distressed about the zeal of the Jews toward Christianity when he wrote the Epistle to the Romans. Their blindness was not occasioned by a lack of opportunity to know, but by unwillingness to appropriate what they had been taught (see Hosea 4:6; Vol. IV, pp. 30–33). Now the same unreasoning state of mind prevailed among the churches of Galatia.

When I am present. Paul was not jealous lest the Galatians become more zealous in his absence than when he had been with them.

19. My little children. This affectionate form of address, common with John, does not appear elsewhere in Paul's writings. It not only expresses Paul's tenderness of feeling toward them but also implies their spiritual immaturity. Inasmuch as Paul regards all who have received the gospel from him as his spiritual children, this expression can hardly be considered a rebuke on his part, as some commentators think. It may simply be a reminder of their indebtedness to him. As their spiritual father, it was only right and proper that he should manifest concern for their welfare. He expresses this same concern for the Corinthians and speaks of himself as their father (see 1 Cor. 4:15).

I travail in birth again. To the Corinthians Paul had written, "I have begotten you through the gospel" (see 1 Cor. 4:15). In bringing the Galatians to Christ he had endured, as it were, the pangs of childbirth. Now that they are giving up their faith, he must go through this bitter experience all over again.

Until Christ be formed. Paul will persist in his efforts until Christ again reigns in their hearts by faith (see on ch. 2:20). The figure of birth seems still to be in the apostle's mind. Jesus spoke of the new birth experience to Nicodemus (John 3:3), and Paul speaks of Christ's being formed within those who accept Him (see Col. 1:27). When Christ dwells within, He lives out His own perfect life through the life of the Christian (see on Rom. 8:3, 4; Gal. 2:20). The Christian's mind is as the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5), and the love of Christ controls him (2 Cor. 5:14). This process continues until the Christian reaches the full "stature" of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

20. Present with you. Paul would far rather deliver his message personally. What he writes may be misinterpreted and misapplied. If he were present, he could answer all the questions that are sure to arise when his letter is read. His enemies will interpret it in its worst light. Even Peter found some things in Paul's letters hard to understand (2 Peter 3:16). And today many obscure the meaning of Paul's words in his letter to the Galatians by failing to study them in their context and against the background of the actual situation that existed in the Galatian churches.

My voice. Or, "my tone of voice." Paul would prefer to change his attitude toward them, but facts are facts. How pleasing it would be to him if their changed attitude would make it possible for him to express confidence in them again, rather than to utter these words of complaint, distrust, and censure. This is what he would do, if present, when they changed their course and returned to their former loyalty to the gospel. Paul here anticipates their change of heart upon receiving his letter.

In doubt of you. Or, “perplexed about you.” His perplexity of soul (see on v. 19) accounts for the severe things he says about them in the letter. Perhaps, ere they should read even this far, they would already have repented. But things being as they are, he must speak what he considers it his duty to speak. They have given evidence of insincerity and fickleness, yet he does not wish to make matters worse by undue severity. This is why he is at a loss to know how to deal with them. He does not feel clear about how much he should say.

21. *Desire.* See on v. 9. In vs. 21–31 Paul enters his final appeal against the folly of Jewish legalism as a means of salvation.

Under the law. Literally, “under law,” that is, under the legal system (see on Rom. 2:12; Gal. 2:16), seeking salvation by works. Obviously Paul cannot be referring to the condemnation of “the law,” for no one would “desire” to be under condemnation.

Hear. That is, heed, pay attention to (see on Matt. 7:24).

The law. Paul now uses the word “law” in a different sense. The illustration of v. 22 is from the Pentateuch, to which the Jews commonly referred as “the law” or “the law of Moses” (see on Luke 24:44). In order to convince the “foolish Galatians” (Gal. 3:1) of their mistake in turning to the works of the ritual law for salvation, Paul went to “the law” of Moses, which contains the ritual law, for evidence. Paul’s question was intended to arouse the Galatians to investigate the revealed word of God. Should they do so candidly, they would discover for themselves the very thing he has sought to explain to them, namely, that “the law” points to Jesus as the one on whom they must depend for their salvation. Paul was continually quoting from the Pentateuch in support of his teachings concerning the message and mission of Jesus.

22. *Two sons.* Ishmael and Isaac (Gen. 16:15; 21:3). Paul now turns to “the law” (see on Gal. 4:21) itself for an illustration of the difference between bondage to “the law” and freedom in Christ. Inasmuch as portions of the Pentateuch were read every Sabbath in the synagogues (see Vol. V, p. 57), the books of Moses were well known to all Jews and to Gentiles who had been attending the synagogue services. The story related was a simple fact of Jewish history, but Paul uses it in an allegorical sense (v. 24) to show the difference between being in bondage to the ceremonial system and enjoying the freedom that comes from faith in Jesus Christ. Abraham actually had more than two sons (see Gen. 25:1, 2), but Ishmael and Isaac were his eldest and most important sons. The false teachers had doubtless been emphasizing the blessing of being sons of Abraham (see on Gal. 3:7). Paul reminds the Galatians that Abraham had two sons and that one fell heir to the covenant promises while the other did not (Gen. 17:19–21). Simply being “sons” of Abraham was no guarantee of receiving the covenant promises.

A bondmaid. Hagar, an Egyptian slave (see on Gen. 16:1–4). Her son Ishmael was the son of Abraham—his firstborn, in fact—but because she was a bondmaid her son was, as it were, a bondson.

A freewoman. That is, Sarah, whose son Isaac was to inherit her freedom.

23. *After the flesh.* Ishmael was the son of human devising, of human effort to bring the covenant promises to fruition. Actually, Ishmael was a living testimony to Abraham’s lack of faith.

By promise. Isaac was the son of promise, the son of faith (Gen. 12:3; 13:14–16; 15:4; 17:3–6, 19–21). The record of his birth is one of remarkable divine interposition (see Gen. 18:10; 21:1, 2; Heb. 11:11, 12). Every circumstance of Isaac’s birth emphasizes

faith. The faith of Abraham is an example of Christian faith (see Rom 4:16–25). He believed God's promises when their fulfillment seemed humanly impossible. Isaac was pre-eminently the son of God's promise and Abraham's faith. Paul here places emphasis on the fact that the son born into a state of inferiority and slavery, and the son of a freewoman, into a life of freedom.

24. An allegory. An allegory is a narrative in which persons, things, and action have a metaphorical meaning, implied but not expressly stated. By this allegory Paul illustrates the status of spiritual slavery into which the Galatians have lapsed, which, in fact, they seem to have desired. The historical events were not allegorical when they took place, nor even when Moses recorded them. It is Paul who makes an allegory out of them, for the express purpose of illustrating the lesson of faith and freedom versus works and bondage. He does not say that these things *were* an allegory, but that they *are* one—that is, that he is making an allegory out of them as he relates the story. In Paul's day this method of discourse was common. Compare the use of parables so common in Jesus' teaching (see Vol. V, pp. 203, 204). One of the most effective ways to communicate truth is to illustrate it by an appropriate and interesting story.

Two covenants. One was the covenant of faith, represented by Sarah; the other, the covenant of "works," represented by Hagar (see on Eze. 16:60; Gal. 3:15, 17–19; Heb. 8:8–10).

Mount Sinai. See on Ex. 19:5–8; 24:7, 8.

Gendereth to bondage. Literally, "bears [children] into bondage." As long as a man depends upon works of law to save him, there is no escape from bondage. In spite of all that he may do to earn salvation he can never succeed. He has obligated himself to perform an impossible task. Legalism, the letter of the law—any law—kills (see on 2 Cor. 3:6).

25. Agar. Or, Hagar.

Is mount Sinai. That is, in Paul's allegory (see on v. 24), Hagar here represents the Sinai covenant of works (see on ch. 3:19). Through Hagar and her son Ishmael, Abraham at one time intended to work out God's plan. It was *his* way of doing it, but not God's. It is not God's plan that man's salvation shall be accomplished by works of law, for the simple reason that it is impossible to do so.

Answereth to. Or, "is comparable to," that is, in Paul's allegory.

Jerusalem which now is. That is, literal Israel as a nation. Israel was still making the mistake that Abraham made with Hagar and Ishmael, of attempting to work out God's purpose according to a man-made plan. Thus by substituting works for faith in God's promises, as Abraham had done, the Galatians were reverting to the very kind of worship that had brought Israel as a nation into bondage, ruin, and rejection.

Is in bondage. See on 2 Cor. 3:14, 15; Gal. 4:3.

Her children. That is, individual Jews and proselytes.

26. Jerusalem which is above. As literal Jerusalem represents Israel as a nation, so "Jerusalem which is above" represents the Christian church (see Heb. 12:22, 23), the new chosen nation (1 Peter 2:9). The New Jerusalem is the capital of the kingdom of glory (see Rev. 21:2; Heb. 11:10), but Paul here uses Jerusalem in a figurative sense; the contrast is between Judaism and Christianity. The former is "in bondage"; the latter is "free."

Free. That is, “free” from the “schoolmaster” of ch. 3:24, 25, from the bondage of ch. 4:3, and from the status of slavery of vs. 22–25.

Mother. In figurative language the Jews often spoke of literal Jerusalem—meaning the nation of Israel—as the “mother” of the living generation of individuals composing the nation. In a similar sense, the historic Christian church is the “mother” of living Christians.

Us all. Probably a reference to the “all” of ch. 3:26, meaning Gentiles and Jews. The middle wall of partition between the Jew and Gentile has been removed by Christ (see Eph. 2:12–22). This good news of unity by faith in Christ brought great joy to the Gentiles, for they were now accepted on an equality with the Jews (see Acts 13:44–48).

27. It is written. The quotation is from Isa. 54:1 (see Vol. IV, pp. 26–30).

Rejoice, thou barren. In Isaiah’s day literal Israel had been “barren” in the sense that she had not brought forth the fruits of righteousness (see Isa. 5:1–7) and had done nothing toward evangelizing the world. The prospect of glorious success now belongs to the Christian church. This promise of the glorious fulfillment of God’s will for them as a nation of light bearers to mankind, originally made to literal Israel, Paul now applies to the church (see Vol. IV, pp. 29, 35, 36). As an Oriental woman who had no children would rejoice at having children, so the Gentiles may rejoice that the gospel privileges once offered Israel are now theirs (see Acts 11:18). The Jews had forfeited their opportunity to be heralds of the Messiah to all the world. In fact, the most stubborn and persistent opposition to the work of the Apostle to the Gentiles came from the Jews.

The desolate. That is, the “freewoman” of vs. 22, 23, “desolate” because she was once “barren.”

Many more children. Here, the large number of Gentile converts who were responding to the gospel message of Paul and the other apostles. When Paul returned to the church at Jerusalem to report to the leaders there, he invariably told of his success among the Gentiles (see Acts 15:12; 21:17–19). The Jews were anxious to make proselytes (see Matt. 23:15), and were, indeed, successful (see Vol. V, p. 62). In nearly every Gentiles, either full proselytes to the Jewish faith or, like Cornelius when Peter first met him (see Acts 10:1, 2), God fearers, attracted by the comparatively high ideals of Judaism. The latter, in great numbers, hesitated to accept circumcision, and were therefore excluded from the full benefits of Jewish worship. When these Gentiles heard the gospel proclaimed, they gladly accepted the good news that accorded them equal opportunity with the Jews to receive all the benefits of salvation provided by Jesus Christ. Many of Paul’s first Gentile converts from city to city probably came from this group. Paul proclaimed the universality of the gospel (see Rom. 1:15–17; Gal. 3:26).

She which hath an husband. In Paul’s allegory, Hagar.

28. Children of promise. See on v. 23. Paul here refers to Christians, whose privilege it is to enter into all the promises originally made to Abraham and his descendants (see Vol. IV, pp. 35). The Jews failed to enter in because of unbelief (Heb. 3:19 to 4:2), and it remained for the chosen people of all nations to enter into the “rest” ordained by God for all who “come boldly unto the throne of grace” (see on Heb. 4:9, 16). The Galatians had believed and were rejoicing in the great truth of righteousness by faith until the false teachers from Jerusalem had persuaded them to attempt to secure it by works. But although they were in the process of turning to “another gospel” (Gal. 1:6, 7), Paul had not given up hope of their return to the pathway of faith.

29. Born after the flesh. Historically, this was Ishmael (see on v. 22). In Paul's allegory (see on v. 24) this refers to the Jews and Judaizing Christians of Paul's day, who sought salvation through the materialistic requirements of the letter of the law (see on 2 Cor. 3:6).

Persecuted. For the historical circumstances alluded to see on Gen. 21:8–11; cf. v. 16:4, 5. The presence of Ishmael made the lot of Isaac a difficult one and threatened to deprive him of the birthright. In a similar way Jews and Judaizing Christians were now persecuting Gentile Christians and attempting to deprive them of the covenant promise of justification by faith.

Born after the Spirit. The historical reference is to Isaac as the son of promise (cf. v. 23). Here Paul refers to Christians who enter into the covenant promise of salvation by faith in Christ through the new birth (see on John 3:3, 5; Gal. 3:2, 3).

Now. All knew well of the persecution Paul had suffered, either directly from the Jews or at their instigation (see Acts 16:19; 19:24–28; see on 2 Cor. 11:24, 26). Paul was rarely disturbed by the Gentiles on their own initiative. His final imprisonment and execution were the result of false reports that originated with the Jews. The fiercest persecutions true Christians have had to suffer have ever been those in which so-called Christians sought to exterminate them because of differences in faith and practice.

30. The bondwoman. That is, historically, Hagar (see on Gen. 21:10; Gal. 4:24). In Paul's allegory, the "bondwoman" represents the old covenant, the ceremonial system, the principle of righteousness by works (see on vs. 24, 25).

Her son. Historically, Ishmael (see on v. 22), and in Paul's allegory all Jews and Judaizing Christians, who maintained that salvation lay in recognizing literal Israel as still God's chosen people and in complying with the provisions of the old covenant and the ceremonial system. For the application of Paul's counsel to our day see p. 934.

Not be heir with. The solution of the problem that faced the church in Galatia and elsewhere was not to blend Judaism with Christianity, but to "cast out" the principle of Judaizing, together with all who promoted it. Salvation by works is altogether incompatible with salvation by faith (see on Rom. 11:6; Eph. 2:8, 9). A blend of the two is impossible, for once faith is diluted by works it ceases to be pure faith. Compare the teachings of Christ on the subject (see on Mark 2:21, 22).

31. So then. That is, on the basis of the allegory of vs. 22–30.

Brethren. In spite of their error, Paul, anticipating that the Galatians will accept his counsel, thinks of them as his "brethren" in the faith.

We. That is, we Christians, including both Jews and Gentiles (see on v. 28).

The free. Historically, Sarah (see on v. 22); in Paul's allegory, the Christian church (see on v. 26). Only children of the "freewoman" were eligible to the privileges of the birthright (v. 30). Christians have access by faith to all of the promises made to Abraham and to Israel of old (see Vol. IV, pp. 35, 36).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

4 CT 259; DA 32, 34, 37; FE 399

4, 5 DA 31; PK 700

12 AA 208

CHAPTER 5

1 *He moveth them to stand in their liberty, 3 and not to observe circumcision: 13 but rather love, which is the sum of the law. 19 He reckoneth up the works of the flesh, 22 and the fruits of the Spirit, 25 and exhorteth to walk in the Spirit.*

1. Stand fast therefore. The line of thought begun in ch. 4:22 continues without interruption. Paul appeals to the Galatians to remain loyal to the gospel as he originally proclaimed it to them (ch. 1:6–9), and not to be influenced in the least degree by the false gospel of the Judaizers. This admonition is of supreme importance today, in the face of innumerable unscriptural theories about salvation and righteousness by faith (cf. Eph. 4:14).

If one is to “stand fast” he must have firm ground upon which to stand. For the Christian, this ground is truth as set forth in Holy Writ. The diligent Christian will persevere in his examination of the Scriptures (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 5T 708), and then examine himself to discover whether he stands fast in the faith (2 Cor. 13:5). Irrespective of how much a man may know about Scripture and its interpretation he must ever continue his search for more truth. It is God’s purpose that the Christian shall continually “grow in grace, and in the knowledge” of Christ (2 Peter 3:18), realizing that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day” (Prov. 4:18).

Liberty. That is, the liberty of salvation by faith directly in Christ, apart from the requirements of the ceremonial system (see on chs. 3:25; 4:5, 31).

Hath made us free. See on chs. 3:22–29; 4:4, 5, 31.

Be not entangled. Or, “do not be ensnared.” The Galatians had come out of bondage to idols when they received Paul’s gospel. Acceptance of the principles of Judaism would be a return to a similar state of bondage (see on ch. 4:3, 9). This virtually meant renouncing Christ altogether. To deny or abandon truth is to become vulnerable to error and sin. Failure to do what we know to be right is sin (see James 4:17).

2. I Paul. The apostle places himself on record and speaks with full apostolic authority. To remain silent in this crisis would make him a traitor before Christ, who had entrusted the care of the churches to him (cf. 2 Tim. 4:1, 2). He received his authority from Christ (see on Gal. 1:11, 12), and expects to be recognized as God’s representative, speaking in God’s stead (see on 2 Cor. 5:19, 20). When the occasion demanded it, Paul asserted his authority without fear or boasting (cf. 1 Cor. 5:3–5; 2 Cor. 13:1–4).

If ye be circumcised. It is as if Paul was saying, “You know that I was once a strict Jew, a firm believer in the rites and ceremonies of Judaism” (Acts 26:5). The issue is clear, the situation is critical. Paul considers that firmness is needed to keep some who are on the point of Judaizing, from doing so. He does not mean that one who has accepted circumcision is thereby prevented from becoming a Christian. He himself was circumcised. If some of the Galatians have already accepted circumcision, they can, like him, consider their circumcision to be “uncircumcision” (1 Cor. 7:18–20). But if some

²Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ga 1:17). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.

are contemplating circumcision in the hope of attaining to a higher experience of righteousness by faith, let them take warning See on Rom. 4:9–13.

Profit you nothing. The promises of God belong only to those who accept them by faith, not to those who set out to earn them by their own merits. The righteous works of man are without value in the bank of heaven (see Isa. 64:6). Righteousness by works is utterly incompatible with righteousness by faith. What has been earned cannot be received as if it were a gift (Rom. 4:4, 5; 11:6). How insistent Paul is that this fact be recognized. The “works of the law” (see on Rom. 2:12; Gal. 2:16) are altogether unprofitable as a means to salvation (see on Gal. 3:19). For the application of the principle here stated to Christians today see p. 934.

3. I testify again. Compare ch. 3:10.

A debtor. He has no claim on Christ (see on v. 2); instead, “the law” has claims on him. Paul makes this statement on the basis that “the law” places a man “under the curse” if he neglects even one of its requirements (see on ch. 3:10). Seemingly the Judaizers now subverting the churches of Galatia had, thus far at least, stressed only circumcision and certain other selected legalistic requirements (see chs. 4:10; 5:2, 3). But the law provides for no selectivity—it is either all or none. One who accepted circumcision thereby expressed belief in the whole system and agreed to submit to all its demands. But at the same time he expressed distrust in the efficacy of the atonement made for him by Jesus Christ. The Galatians would find it impossible to maintain allegiance to Judaism and Christianity at the same time (see on Matt. 6:24).

Paul does not intend to teach that it is sinful for one to be circumcised. He had consented to have Timothy circumcised, though under different circumstances, to be sure. Timothy was half Jewish, and Paul had him circumcised as a concession to the prejudices of the Jews among whom he was to labor (see Acts 16:1–3). So far as Paul and Timothy were concerned the act was mere form. It was the insistence of the Judaizers on the necessity of circumcision as a means to salvation and as a requirement in the Christian churches that Paul continually denies and combats.

The whole law. See on ch. 2:16.

4. Become of no effect. Or, “severed relations with,” “made inoperative.” The covenant relationship requires absolute faith on the part of the believer (see on v. 1). He who mingles works-righteousness with his faith thereby violates his part of the agreement, and Christ is thus released from any further obligation toward him. “Works” are a denial of faith. The Galatians called themselves Christians; in fact, they had been persuaded that only those who accepted “the law” could be true Christians. But by their course of action they were denying the very thing Christ had come to do for them and had deprived themselves of His merits. If they could, indeed, earn salvation, what need had they of Christ at all? His work on their behalf would become superfluous, for they had found a way to get right with God on their own behalf. If they could find justification outside of Christ, then they did not need Him. But Jesus had declared that no man could come unto the Father except by Him (John 14:6; cf. Acts 4:12). Jesus’ emphasis on the truth that He is “the way” is so prominent in His teachings that in later years His followers called themselves the people of “the way” (see Acts 9:2; 22:4).

Justified by the law. That is, think they can obtain righteousness through work of law (see p. 933; see on Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:19, 24). The most “the law” can do is to show a man his need of justification and to point out to him the way to Christ. In his gospel Paul

had clearly set forth God's plan for man's salvation. It is the same plan by which Abraham received justification (see on Gal. 3:6). It was not until after he had been declared righteous that he received the rite of circumcision. Circumcision—one of “the works of the law”—did not bring righteousness. It was a sign that Abraham accepted righteousness by faith (see Rom. 4:9–11). The “works” Paul later recommends (Gal. 5:13 to 6:15) are the “fruit of the Spirit” (ch. 5:22), and thus evidence of the power of Christ unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), but in no way a means of earning salvation.

Fallen from grace. Literally, “fallen out of grace,” “fallen down from grace.” For the meaning of “grace” see on Rom. 3:24. The Galatians had received the Spirit of God (ch. 3:2, 3), they had experienced justification by faith (ch. 1:6), they had actually enjoyed the liberty of the gospel (ch. 5:1), they had “run well” for a time (v. 7). If they now sought salvation by “the works of the law” (see on ch. 2:16), they would forfeit the grace of Christ they had hitherto enjoyed (see on ch. 5:1–4; cf. on ch. 3:19). These two methods of obtaining justification are mutually exclusive. To adopt the one is to reject the other.

The position some take, that Paul here affirms the arbitrary withdrawal of God's grace because of certain acts of sin, is without scriptural support. The loss of divine favor results from the voluntary act of the one who forfeits it. God bars no one from the blessings of salvation except those who bar themselves (see Eze. 18:23, 31; 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9; see on John 3:17–20; Eph. 1:4–6). The context of the statement shows clearly that the responsibility rests wholly with those who deliberately reject salvation by faith for salvation by works. It is not a matter of God forsaking men, but of men turning away from Him and rejecting to all who will turn from their willful ways (see John 3:16; 1 John 1:9). One who has fallen from God's grace is always—and only—one who has willfully chosen a course of conduct he knows to be contrary to the will of God. This is the deplorable state of many professed Christians today. This condition is the result of a desire to follow the natural inclinations of the human heart—to enjoy the pleasures of sin—instead of heeding the promptings of God's Spirit. Until such persons commit the unpardonable sin by persistent rejection of the promptings of the Spirit (see on Matt. 12:31, 32, 43–45), there is hope that they may be restored to grace.

Paul here specifically and emphatically denies another popular but altogether unscriptural teaching commonly expressed in the words, “once in grace, always in grace.” This, in turn, is based on another unscriptural teaching, according to which God has predestined certain persons to be saved and others to be lost, irrespective of their own choice in the matter. For a discussion of the true nature of Biblical predestination see on John 3:17–20; Eph. 1:4–6. According to the popular concept of predestination, those whom God has elected to salvation cannot possibly fall from divine grace because their right to it has been guaranteed by God. By a parity of reasoning those whom God has foreordained to damnation can never attain to divine grace, and consequently can never fall from it. Corollary to this is the conclusion that those who appear to have fallen from grace only appear to have done so, since they have never actually attained to it. Suffice it to say that only by taking the words of Gal. 5:4 completely out of their context is it possible to make them appear to sustain such a conclusion (see on vs. 1–4).

In reality, this theory—the theory of so-called divine decrees—ignores all the plain statements of Scripture that point to the human will as the decisive factor in the salvation of any and every man. See such passages of Scripture as Isa. 55:1; Eze. 18:21–30; 33:12, 13; Luke 5:32; John 6:37; cf. John 7:37; 12:32; Rom. 10:13; 11:20–23; 1 Cor. 9:27; Rev.

22:17. The doctrine that God foreordains some men to salvation and others to destruction, irrespective of their choice in the matter, is clearly incompatible with these statements of Holy Writ. Thus the corollary teaching that a man cannot fall from grace—that when once “in grace” he is “always in grace”—proves to be a human invention.

5. For we. The word “we” is emphatic—“we” who seek righteousness by faith in contrast with those alluded to in vs. 1–4, who seek it by works of law (see on ch. 2:16).

Through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit was commissioned to carry on the work Christ had begun (John 14:16), and it was through the operation of the Spirit that men were to enter into salvation by faith in Christ (ch. 16:7–9). The presence of the Spirit in the lives of believers is a continual reminder, a guarantee, that God will fulfill all His promises (see on 2 Cor. 1:22). In particular this is true of promises concerning the return of Jesus and the inheritance of the saints (Eph. 1:13, 14; cf. Col. 1:27; Titus 2:13). The gift of righteousness is communicated to men through the agency of the Holy Spirit (see John 16:8). Herein lies the difference between the ineffective righteousness man seeks through works and the effective righteousness that comes through faith. In the former the Spirit has no part, for the effort is purely human and thus independent of divine grace.

Wait for. Gr. *apekdechomai*, “to wait patiently for.” In all the six other instances where this word appears (Rom. 8:19, 23, 25; 1 Cor. 1:7; Phil. 3:20; Heb. 9:28) it is used of waiting or looking for the coming of Jesus and the resurrection.

Hope of righteousness. That is, the hope made possible through righteousness. Paul does not imply that those who have received the Spirit must wait for righteousness. They “wait for the *hope*” imparted by righteousness, the hope of the completion of the plan of salvation at the return of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead (Rom. 8:23; Titus 2:13). Paul consistently speaks of justification as a completed work in the life of the Christian (Rom. 5:1; etc.; see on Matt. 5:48).

By faith. Not by “works.”

6. In Jesus Christ. Paul thus describes the status of one who has been justified by faith in Christ, one who has become a Christian, not in name only, but in fact.

Circumcision. See on Gen. 17:10, 11; Rom. 4:11. In no sense does Paul condemn those who have been circumcised; he simply warns that when a person is “in Jesus Christ” it makes no difference whether he is circumcised. The decisive factor is faith. Circumcision itself is a matter of indifference to the Christians, so far as anything beyond the physical aspect is concerned, but with the supposed religious value of the rite and the concept of works-righteousness it connotes, Christianity is unalterably at war.

Faith which worketh. Faith does have “works,” but these are not the “works of the law” (see on ch. 2:16). Thus excluded are all “works” performed for the purpose of earning righteousness (see p. 934). The “works” that accompany genuine faith are inspired by the spirit of appreciation for the gift of divine grace, by love for God and for one’s fellow men (see Gal. 5:14; see on Matt. 22:34–40). It is of works such as these that James speaks when he declares that “faith without works is dead” (James 2:26; cf. ch. 4:17). At this point the teachings of Paul and James meet. The two are not in conflict, as some have hastily concluded. It is a counterfeit faith that does not produce the “fruit of the Spirit” in the life (Gal. 5:22, 23). It is a counterfeit faith that leads a man to think himself released from obedience to the will of God as expressed in the Decalogue, which is simply a brief outline of how love toward God and man will find expression (see on Matt. 5:17, 18; 7:21–27). Without obedience a profession of love is sheer hypocrisy.

Obedience to known duty is an inevitable result of the righteousness that comes by faith, and is the supreme test of its genuineness (see James 2:18). Paul emphatically declares that God's purpose in giving His Son to save sinners (see on John 3:16) was to make it possible for the principles of His holy law to be worked out in the lives of men (see on Rom. 8:3, 4). In the section from Gal. 5:13 to 6:15 Paul deals with the kind of "works" that he recommends to the Galatian Christians.

By love. Love for God and man is the spirit that prompts the "works" that accompany faith.

7. Run well. Paul repeatedly compares the Christian life to a race (1 Cor. 9:24, 26; Phil. 2:16; 2 Tim. 4:7; Heb. 12:1). The Galatians had "run well" until the coming of the Judaizers (see on Gal. 1:6, 7; 3:1). They had set out on the Christian race with ardor and zeal.

Did hinder. Gr. *anakoptō*, "to beat back," "to check," as a ship in its course. As a military term it referred, for instance, to breaking up a road or destroying a bridge or placing obstacles in the way of an enemy, to halt his advance. There were obviously some who troubled the Galatians (ch. 1:7) and "bewitched" them (ch. 3:1). These were, of course, the Judaizers (see p. 932).

This persuasion. That is, persuasion to accept the teachings of the Judaizers.

Him that calleth. That is, Paul, or perhaps God speaking through Paul (see on Gal. 1:6; cf. 2 Cor. 5:19, 20). God could not have so persuaded them, nor could Paul. There must have been something peculiarly fascinating about the teaching of the Judaizers, for so many of the early Christians were seduced by it and so much of what Paul wrote warned against it (see pp. 33, 932). At this distance it seems almost as strange that Christians were lured into Judaizing as that in OT times the Jews were lured into idolatry.

9. Leaven. Or, "yeast." See on Matt. 13:33; 1 Cor. 5:6; cf. 2 Tim. 2:17. From a seemingly small beginning the influence of the Judaizers had grown to amazing proportions. Where Paul quotes this proverb in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 5:6) it refers to the contagious example of a few members whose conduct Paul felt compelled to rebuke. If the movement in Galatia were to continue, in time the whole Christian church would return to the practice of the rites and ceremonies of Judaism.

10. Confidence in you. The course of apostasy in Galatia, though alarming, was not yet complete (see on chs. 1:7; 3:10; 4:10; 5:3). Paul is confident that the majority, at least, will recognize their mistake and not be led astray (cf. 2 Cor. 2:3; 7:16; 8:22). This expression of confidence reflects good judgment on Paul's part, as a church leader, for confidence inspires confidence and stimulates to action. Leadership must ever sound a note of hope and courage, even under severe trial.

None otherwise minded. That is, that they will have a mind to accept Paul's counsel and heed his warning (see on vs. 1-6). Paul tactfully avoids attempting to coerce his readers into believing as he does. He sets forth the facts in an honest, logical way and calls upon them to make their own decisions in the light of the evidence presented. He hopes for unity in the Galatian church, and since the only reasonable course to follow is the one he advocates, he believes they will see as he does. He commends them in advance for their good judgment.

He that troubleth. See on ch. 1:7. The Galatians are wavering, apparently in a state of uncertainty and perplexity. More than one person was responsible for the defection in Galatia (chs. 1:7; 4:17). By the singular pronoun "he" Paul may not refer to any particular

leader, but to each teacher of heresy individually, or the “he” may reflect the fact that only a few were responsible for troubling the church.

Judgment. Gr. *krima*, the “sentence” imposed. Those who were subverting the Galatian churches would have to answer before God for their reprehensible course of action and accept the punishment He was sure to impose upon them (see Acts 17:31; Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10). Paul believes in the triumph of truth and justice, and that nothing can hinder the onward march of the gospel (see 2 Cor. 13:8; Phil. 1:12).

11. Preach circumcision. The Judaizers had apparently accused Paul of doing so, probably because he had had Timothy, and possibly others, circumcised (Acts 16:1–3). They no doubt intended to make Paul appear inconsistent. See on Gal. 5:2–4.

Yet suffer persecution. Paul answers the baseless charge by posing a question that proves it invalid. If it be true, he asks, why do the Judaizers still persecute him? (see 2 Cor. 11:26; Gal. 2:4). Most of the persecution Paul suffered was at the hands of the Jews (see on ch. 4:29). Everywhere he went persecution arose, almost invariably because there was no room for Jewish legalism in his gospel. This, of course, was a false accusation, for Paul continually appealed to Moses for support of his gospel. Circumcision being the peculiar badge of Judaism, it would be strange indeed for the Jews to persecute Paul if they actually believed he was advocating circumcision.

Offence. Gr. *skandalon*, the trigger stick that springs a trap (see on 1 Cor. 1:23).

Metaphorically, a *skandalon* might be anything that trips a person and causes him to stumble. To the Jews the cross was a *skandalon*, a “stumblingblock” (1 Cor. 1:23). This was because they thought that the Messiah would come as a great political and military leader to liberate them from the tyranny of the Romans (see on Luke 4:19). When Jesus submitted to cruelty they inflicted upon Him the Jews concluded that He could not be the Promised One. His humility they interpreted as weakness. Had they accepted the prophecy of Isa. 53 they would not have made this mistake. There was no room in their minds or hearts for a suffering Messiah.

Ceased. “Circumcision” is incompatible with the “cross” (see on vs. 1, 2). If Paul indeed is preaching “circumcision,” it can only be because he is no longer preaching the “cross.” The one cannot exist beside the other.

12. I would. Paul does not wish his opponents ill. He simply means that the Judaizers might as well, and logically, do as he suggests, for if they should do so they would *appear* to be what they really were—fanatics.

Cut off. Gr. *apokoptō*, “to cut off,” as a rope (Acts 27:32), “to dismember oneself,” “to mutilate oneself,” as in Mark 9:43; John 18:10, “to castrate oneself,” “to make oneself a eunuch,” as here, in the LXX of Deut. 23:1, and commonly in the papyri. The word is never used figuratively, as of cutting a person off from church fellowship, or from life.

The city of Pessinus in central Galatia (see Events Leading to the Writing of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians) was the seat of the cult and worship of Cybele, the nature goddess of ancient Anatolia. It was the custom of men devoting their lives to the worship and service of Cybele to make themselves eunuchs. Paul suggests that the Judaizers, who advocate circumcision, might as well castrate themselves. If a measure of virtue can be secured by circumcision, one should be able to obtain even more by castration! Because

of their deliberate misrepresentation of Paul (v. 11) the Judaizers proved themselves to be no better than the heathen. See p. 33; see on Acts 16:6.

This is the climax of Paul's argument against the Judaizers, and his last reference to them in the book of Galatians. Judaizing is on a par with heathenism, and circumcision is of no more value as a means to salvation than the pagan practice of castration. For Christians, circumcision, as a religious rite, was a meaningless mutilation of the body.

13. Called unto liberty. That is, the "liberty" of salvation by faith in Christ as opposed to salvation by the works of the law (see on v. 1). Concerning the relationship between the "liberty" of the gospel and the law of God see on v. 6. Compare the teachings of our Lord on the subject of Christian liberty (John 8:31–36).

Liberty is not to be confused with license. True love for God leads one to seek to understand and to do the will of God. God's love and grace do not release a man from loyalty and obedience to Him (see on Matt. 7:21–27; Gal. 5:6). The "liberty" of which Paul speaks is freedom from "bondage" to the ceremonial system (see on ch. 5:1). Concerning the relationship between Christian liberty and divine law see on Rom. 3:31 (cf. on Gal. 3:19, 24). A man can experience no higher joy than the joy that comes from wholehearted, intelligent cooperation with the divine purpose that gave him existence.

Occasion to the flesh. The liberty of the gospel does not license a man to practice the "works of the flesh" (see on vs. 19–21). Freedom is a safe possession only where there is self-control to balance it. God sets men free from sin and then works in them "to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13; cf. on Rom. 8:3, 4).

Serve one another. That is, instead of taking advantage of one another. The last two clauses stand in antithesis, each to the other. He who gives "occasion to the flesh" serves himself, not his fellow men. Love for others is made evident by readiness to serve them (see on Matt. 22:39, 40). Paul commonly refers to himself as a "servant" (see Rom. 1:1; Titus 1:1), but his bondage was the voluntary servitude of love. Love for God finds its highest and best expression in love and service for one's fellows (see 1 John 4:20, 21). In Gal. 5:13 to 6:15 Paul stresses the truth that the only valid evidence of acceptance with God and sonship to Him is a transformed life (ch. 6:15) in which "the fruit of the Spirit" (ch. 5:22, 23) reaches maturity and brings "good unto all men" (chs. 6:10; cf. ch. 5:13). This kind of love fulfills the law (Rom. 13:10).

14. The law. The Greek has the definite article (see on Rom. 2:12). Here Paul refers to the torah, that is, to all the revealed will of God to man, but especially to the moral law, as the context implies.

One word. That is, love (see on Matt. 5:43, 44).

Love thy neighbour. This is the theme of ch. 5:13 to 6:15. Love for one's fellow men is the theme of the last six commands of the Decalogue (see on Matt. 22:39, 40). These six govern the relation of man to man, as the first four govern relations between God and man. Paul's silence here concerning the first four commands does not imply that they have lost their value for the Christian. Far from it. The theme of the epistle thus far has been right relations between a Christian and his God. But lest the Galatians err in thinking that religion consists only in a right relationship to God, Paul now makes clear that it consists also in right relations with one's fellow men. The citation is from Lev. 19:18.

15. Bite and devour one another. A vivid metaphor that paints a picture of cannibalism. The Galatians were conducting themselves like wild, ravenous beasts. By

word and deed they were preying upon one another. Activities such as gossip, slander, and sharp dealing are no doubt included.

Consumed one of another. Church history records the sad fate of one religious group after another in which Paul's fateful warning was fulfilled. The unity of the faith, and the unity of believers within the unity of the faith, was the subject of our Lord's prayer recorded in John 17. With such a condition prevailing as that here described by Paul, no Christian group can enjoy a healthy religious experience.

16. Walk in the Spirit. Literally, "walk in Spirit," that is, in harmony with spiritual ideals (see on Rom. 8:1, 14). Paul uses this expression repeatedly in his epistles. The Holy Spirit is God's appointed agent to lead men to eternal life (see on John 16:8–11).

Lust. Gr. *epithumia*, "lust" (see on Mark 4:19). For comment on the expression "lust of the flesh" see on Rom. 13:14. To "fulfil the lust of the flesh" is to accept the guidance of carnal passions, feelings, and desires, the antithesis of walking "in the Spirit." The way of the Spirit leads to life, but the way of the flesh leads to death (see Rom. 8:6–8). The word "flesh" here stands for the corrupt human nature.

17. Against the Spirit. The seemingly interminable warfare goes on, the struggle between the inclination to do right and the inclination to do evil. As Paul analyzed this conflict in his own past experience he saw victory possible only through Jesus Christ (see Rom. 7:24 to Rom. 8:2).

These are contrary. Inevitably and unalterably so. There is no compromise between the two. Compromise with evil never results in good.

The things that ye would. See on Rom. 7:21–24. Paul's teaching concerning the weakness of the flesh is out of harmony with the belief that there is latent in man a force by which he can overcome evil tendencies.

18. Led by the Spirit. See on Rom. 8:14.

Not under the law. Paul warns the Galatians that the Holy Spirit never leads men to seek salvation by compliance with the requirements of the Jewish ritual system, or for that matter through any system of legal righteousness (see p. 934). Conversely, those who submit to a legalistic religion are at war with the Holy Spirit. See on ch. 2:16.

19. Works of the flesh. That is, the deeds that result from the unrestricted operation of human passions, feelings, and desires. See on v. 16. Paul gives a partial list of these "works" in vs. 19–21.

Manifest. The following catalogue of sins is illustrative rather than exhaustive. Sensuality, superstition, selfishness, and intemperance are all represented. As the Galatians forsook the guidance of the Holy Spirit these evil fruits doubtless appeared in their lives.

Adultery. Important textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for omitting this word. "Fornication," that is, immorality in general, would, of course, include "adultery."

Fornication. Or, "immorality" (see on Matt. 5:32).

Uncleanness. Or, "impurity" (see on 2 Cor. 12:21).

Lasciviousness. Or, "unbridled lust" (see on 2 Cor. 12:21).

20. Idolatry. Anything that takes the place of God in our affections becomes an idol. Heathen worship commonly included immoral practices and encouraged its devotees to engage in them (see Vol. II, pp. 39, 40; see on Deut. 23:17).

Witchcraft. Gr. *pharmakeia*, literally, "poison," "magic potion," "the administering of drugs," and thus "sorcery" (see on Ex. 7:11), the supposed ability to produce magic

spells. Paul encountered the practice of sorcery at Ephesus (see on Acts 19:19). Ancient sorcery and modern Spiritualism have much in common. John includes sorcery among the sins of those who are finally shut out from God's presence (Rev. 21:8; cf. chs. 9:21; 18:23).

Variance. Or, "hostility," "enmity."

Emulations. Or, "envy," "jealousy."

Seditions. Rather, "dissension," "division."

Heresies. Gr. *haireseis* (see on 1 Cor. 11:19), here meaning "factions." Compare the situation in the church at Corinth (see 1 Cor. 1:12, 13). The true Christian spirit is one of unity (see on John 17:21).

21. Murders. Important textual evidence favors (cf. p. 10) the omission of this word.

Revellings. Or, "carousings."

Shall not inherit. See on 1 Cor. 6:9; cf. Rev. 21:27.

Kingdom of God. Here, the future kingdom of divine glory (see on Matt. 4:17; Matt. 5:2).

22. Fruit of the Spirit. That which naturally develops in the life when the Spirit has control (cf. v. 18). The results of such control stand in marked contrast with the works of the flesh (vs. 19–21). The fruit of the Spirit is not the natural product of human nature, but of a power wholly outside of man.

Attention may be called to the fact that the word "fruit" is in the singular, whereas the word "works" (v. 19) is plural. There is but one "fruit of the Spirit," and that one fruit includes all of the Christian graces enumerated in vs. 22, 23. In other words, all of these graces are to be present in the life of the Christian, and it cannot be said that he is bearing the "fruit of the Spirit" if any one is missing. On the other hand, there are many different forms in which evil may manifest itself, and it is necessary for only one of the evil traits listed in vs. 19–21 to be present in the life for a man to be classified with those who produce the "works of the flesh." It takes all the Christian graces to make a man a true follower of Christ, but only one of the "works of the flesh" to make a man a follower of the evil one.

Love. See on Matt. 5:43, 44; 1 Cor. 13.

Joy. See on Rom. 14:17.

Peace. See on John 14:27.

Longsuffering. Or, "patience." See on 1 Cor. 13:4; 2 Cor. 6:6.

Gentleness. Or, "kindness," Gr. *chrēstos* (see on 2 Cor. 6:6). A gentle person is mild of temper, calm, and quiet in disposition. A Christian is never to be morose or sullen, but ever cheerful, thoughtful of others, and courteous.

Goodness. That is, uprightness in heart and life, in motives and in conduct. See on Matt. 7:12; 12:33; 19:17; John 7:12.

Faith. Gr. *pistis*, which means both "faith" and "faithfulness." Whereas "faith" is an attitude of confidence in other persons or in truths for which objective evidence is incomplete, "faithfulness" is a quality of conduct that gives others reason for confidence in us. Faith is a mental attitude; faithfulness, a pattern of conduct. Here "faithfulness" would be more appropriate, as being more nearly comparable with the other "fruit" listed. See on Heb. 11:16.

23. Meekness. Or, “mildness,” “gentleness.” For comment on this character trait see on Matt. 5:5; 11:29.

Temperance. Literally, “self-control.” The word includes much more than abstinence from intoxicating drinks. It signifies moderation in all things and complete control over every passion and appetite. Excesses of every kind are excluded. It is possible to be intemperate even in working for the Lord, by disregarding the laws of health. For comment on the Christian ideal of perfection see on 1 Cor. 10:31; cf. on Matt. 5:48. Textual evidence may be cited (cf. p. 10) for adding “purity” to this list of Christian virtues.

No law. There is no condemnation against those who do so order their lives. Such “works” as these are highly commended (see on vs. 6, 13, 14), as the “works” of the ceremonial system are condemned (vs. 1, 4). Only those who reflect in their lives these characteristics of the Spirit are truly free, and can enjoy genuine happiness. Only they are wholly at peace with God and man.

24. Crucified the flesh. That is, completely and irrevocably renounced every natural tendency that is out of harmony with the will of God. For comment on “crucified with Christ” see on Gal. 2:20; cf. on Rom. 6:2–16. For comment on “the flesh” see on Gal. 5:13, 17, 19.

The Christian’s warfare against unholy natural tendencies, appetites, and passions consists of two steps. The first is a considered, firm, fixed, irrevocable decision to surrender the heart and will to Christ so that He may purge every wrong tendency from the life. This decision is to be reaffirmed every day, and as often during the day as temptations may arise or one may fall short of the mark of perfection. Only thus can the Christian carry out the command to present his body “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God” (see on Rom. 12:1). God accepts this resolute decision of the will and proceeds with the heavenly work of transforming the life (Rom. 12:2) and conforming it to the likeness of Christ. This is the process of sanctification, of attaining “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Eph. 4:13). For comment on the Christian’s status during the course of this process see on Matt. 5:48. The Christian may still make mistakes (see MYP 338), though not deliberately, but so long as he comes to Christ, genuinely repentant (Heb. 4:15, 16; 1 John 2:1) and reaffirming his original vow of loyalty, he is still acknowledged a son of God and granted the privilege of wearing the robe of Christ’s righteousness (see on Matt. 22:1–14). Discouragement may arise because of failure, when we attempt to defeat sin in our own strength rather than rely on God’s power, or when we fail to cooperate with God (see Phil. 2:12, 13). There is also danger in contentment with our present accomplishments, danger in measuring our progress by that of others around us. The crucifying of the flesh is a warfare from which there is no release in this life. Nevertheless the Christian’s experience may be one of continuous victory in Christ Jesus, and of rising immediately whenever he may fall. See on Rom. 7:25 to 8:4; 1 John 5:4.

Affections. Or, “passions.”

Lusts. See on v. 16.

25. If we live. If we make a profession of accepting the guidance of the Holy Spirit, let us actually follow this out in our daily lives.

26. Desirous of vain glory. Or, “conceited,” “egotistical.” Even in their hearts Christians are not to boast of their spiritual attainments (see v. 25), but in humility to count others better than themselves (Phil. 2:3).

Provoking one another. Nothing can be more offensive to others than an affectation of superior virtue.

Envyng one another. This is the converse of “provoking one another.” It is just as fatal to Christian character to be jealous of those who may, in certain respects, be superior to us as it is to feel superior ourselves. Often an affectation of superiority is simply an attempt to conceal feelings of inferiority owing to the realization that others are, in fact, superior. Envy leads to hatred, and hatred, in turn, seeks revenge. Humility ever remains a cardinal Christians virtue. See Phil 2:3.

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 AA 388; CSW 35; EW 124; TM 247
- 6 AH 31; FE 263, 341, 358; MB 53; MH 169; MM 316; 1T 705; 5T 482, 534, 648; 6T 238; 7T 93; 8T 195; 9T 141
- 7 2T 100
- 9 FE 55; 4T 203, 489
- 12–165T 243
- 13 DA 651; Ed 139
- 16 SL 30; 5T 243
- 16, 17 CH 69
- 17 CD 389; MM 278; MYP 114; SL 92; TM 160
- 19–215T 244
- 20, 21 SL 30
- 21 DA 806; PP 461
- 22 PP 372; SL 13; 1T 303; 5T 48, 169
- 22, 23 AA 38; COL 68; Ev 557; FE 240; GC 474; GW 128, 287; ML 50; MYP 242; SC 58; SL 15, 80; 4T 355, 570; 5T 117, 306; WM 152
- 22–244T 365; 5T 148
- 22–263T 236; 5T 650
- 24 CD 44; SL 23, 30; 1T 440; 2T 443, 484; 3T 45, 241; 4T 655; 5T 47, 83
- 26 FE 121

CHAPTER 6

- 1 *He moveth them to deal mildly with a brother that hath slipped, 2 and to bear one another's burden: 6 to be liberal to their teachers, 9 and not weary of well doing. 12 He sheweth what they intend that preach circumcision. 14 He glorieth in nothing, save in the cross of Christ.*

1. Overtaken. That is, by the force of the temptation. The line of thought in ch. 5 continues without interruption. Paul here refers to the fact that a Christian may, in a moment of weakness, or spiritual sloth, be taken off his guard (see on ch. 5:24). He is not an obstinate hypocrite. His purpose was to “walk in the Spirit” (v. 25), but he was tripped up by temptation. He had intended that the “fruit of the Spirit” (vs. 22, 23) should be evident in his life, but found to his distress some of the old “works of the flesh” (vs. 19–21). He had received the Spirit (ch. 3:2), “begun in the Spirit” (v. 3), and set out under the guidance of the Spirit (ch. 5:18) to bear the “fruit of the Spirit” (vs. 22, 23). His

intentions had been good, but like Paul (see Rom. 7:19–24), he had discovered to his dismay that the flesh is weak.

Spiritual. That is, those who are being “led of the Spirit” (ch. 5:18). Apparently there was a representative group in the Galatian churches who had not given up Paul’s gospel for the teachings of the Judaizers. Paul would hardly have called those who were apostatizing, “spiritual,” for such persons were renouncing the guidance of the Spirit (ch. 3:3).

Restore. Gr. *katartizō*, “to mend,” “to render fit,” “to restore,” “to put in shape.” Greek medical writers used the term of setting a bone or a dislocated joint. Those who remained “spiritual” were not to take a conceited attitude toward the brother who had fallen before the onslaughts of temptation. They were not to discourage him or, by criticism and censure, to provoke him to further indulgence in the “works of the flesh” (see on ch. 5:19, 26). He stood in dire need of a sympathetic hand to help him out of the pit of sin into which he had fallen. In his disappointment and disillusionment he needed someone to approach him with patience, kindness, and gentleness (vs. 22, 23), someone who realized that he might himself someday be overcome by temptation and be in need of similar help.

In dealing with those who have gone astray we should, more than under any other circumstances, practice the golden rule (see on Matt. 7:12). This is the duty and privilege of those who are themselves controlled by the Spirit and who are walking in ways of righteousness. Others are not qualified for so delicate a task. God calls upon those who are “spiritual” to guide wandering sheep back into the green pastures of truth and righteousness. Paul dealt resolutely and fearlessly with those who persisted in open sin (see 1 Cor 3:3–5) but tenderly and patiently with those who gave evidence of a desire to be restored (2 Cor. 2:5–11). Church discipline calls for a skillful blend of firmness and kindness. Paul never relaxed the high standards of the gospel, but his object was ever the salvation of men and women and their restoration to Christ when they went astray. See on Matt. 6:14, 15; 7:1–5; 18:10–35.

Meekness. See on Matt. 5:5; Gal. 5:23. Jesus was an example of meekness (see Matt. 11:29), and those who follow His example will be kind and forbearing in dealing with their brethren. They will not be critical and faultfinding, nor will they make haste to bring down upon one who errs the discipline of the church. Their zeal for justice will be seasoned with mercy. Their primary objective will be the restoration of the offender. Their proposals and decisions will be remedial, not punitive. The maintenance of church authority will be a secondary consideration.

Considering thyself. We cannot restore others unless we are right ourselves; we cannot know whether we are right ourselves unless we constantly check our lives by the divine standard and partake daily of the life of Jesus. As we seek to remedy the defects of others we are to keep an eye on ourselves. Those who would rescue others from the swift current of sin must have their own feet planted on firm ground. A concern for our own spiritual standing before God is prerequisite to a concern for that of one who needs our help. We should also realize that we ourselves are prone to fall, and that realization will keep us from displaying a holier-than-thou attitude as we seek to help a brother who has fallen.

2. Burdens. Gr. *baros*, “weight,” “burden,” “heaviness.” The golden rule (Matt. 7:12) calls upon every follower of Christ to consider another’s problems as if they were his

own. The application of this principle in personal relations, in the home, the community, the school, and the church, and on a national and international basis would solve the ills of the world. The grace of Christ alone makes it possible to apply this principle under all circumstances. See on Mat. 5:43–47.

The law of Christ. The law, or principle, that motivated Christ's life was that of bearing other's others' burdens. Christ came to earth as man's great burden bearer (see Isa. 53:6). The only formal "commandment" our Lord gave His disciples while on earth was to "love one another" (see John 13:34). For the sense in which this command was "new" see on John 13:34. Christ declared also that "all the law and the prophets"—all of God's revealed will (see on Luke 24:44)—are based on love, love for God and one's fellow men. To the Romans, Paul wrote that love fulfills the law (ch. 13:10). Thus, "the law of Christ" is the epitome of the Ten Commandments, for when we live out those laws, we truly love both God and man (see on Matt. 22:34–40). For further comment on Jesus' teachings with respect to love for one's fellow men see on Matt. 5:43, 44; Luke 10:30–37.

3. *Think himself.* That is, considers himself superior to those who have fallen before the onslaughts of temptation (v. 1). See on Rom. 12:3; 1 Cor. 8:2. For comment on pride versus Christian humility see on Luke 14:7–11; 18:9–14.

Deceiveth himself. The one who overestimates his work or worth is the one who is deceived. The danger of self-conceit lies in the fact that it stifles self-examination and a sense of need. Before God can do anything for us we must become aware of our need (see on Matt. 5:3). Thus the most hopeless man in the world is the one who had deceived himself into complete self-satisfaction. God can do nothing for us unless we are willing to accept what He has to offer. One who is not aware of his need will never ask for God's grace.

4. *Prove his own work.* That is, scrutinize his own conduct and motives and evaluate them by "the law of Christ" (v. 2). See on 2 Cor. 13:5. It is the appointed work of the Holy Spirit to assist in this task (see John 16:8–15). It is better for him to give his life a critical examination now than to postpone doing so until it is too late to do so profitably—when the great Judge of all men requires him to appear before the bar of divine justice. This testing process is essential to growth in grace, to the process of sanctification. The Christian does well each day to weigh his inclinations and ambitions in the light of God's revealed purpose and plan for him, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Himself alone. When it comes to making an analysis of character it is best for each man to concentrate on himself, not on others. How foolish he would be to labor away to remedy the defects of other men and remain unaware of his own shortcomings. For further comment see on Matt. 7:1–5. How much joy would he ultimately find in contemplating the perfecting of their character, and he himself be found a reprobate? How much better for him to devote his time and efforts to remedying the defects of his own character. Then, in the great judgment day he will have reason to rejoice. See on Gal. 6:7–9.

5. *Burden.* Gr. *phortion*, "load," "burden," some object it is one's duty to carry. The "burdens" of v. 2 may be laid aside rather readily if need be, whereas the "burden" of v. 5 is one that must, under any circumstance, continue to be borne. Every soldier is expected to carry his own kit; it is his responsibility to do so. He may also, at times, assist others to

bear theirs. He will be called to account for his own “burden,” but not necessarily for the “burdens” of others. Bearing the burdens of others in addition to his own is commendable, but neglecting his own is inexcusable. He is not to impose upon others, however much he himself may be imposed upon by them.

Paul does not here imply that God leaves man to bear his burdens alone. Jesus offers to share them (see on Matt. 11:30). Some Christians make the mistake of not sharing their burdens with Jesus. He invites all to come to Him, and He assures relief from the toil that could never be endured in one’s own strength (see Matt. 11:28–30).

6. Taught in the word. Or, “receives instruction in the word.”

Communicate unto. Gr. *koinōneō*, “to have fellowship with,” “to share with,” “to be a partaker with” (see Rom. 15:27; 1 Tim. 5:22; Heb. 2:14; 1 Peter 4:13; 2 John 11). Well may the Galatians have this kind of fellowship with Paul. The one who “is taught” the gospel should purpose to share in all the “good things” his teachers have imparted to him. This will help him to “prove his own work” and to “bear his own burden.” It has also been suggested that Paul here recommends the support of the gospel ministry by those who benefit by it. If this is what the apostle means, his statement would seem to have little direct relationship to its context.

Him that teacheth. That is, every Christian teacher, though Paul here doubtless refers particularly to himself.

7. Be not deceived. God holds every man accountable for the “good things” his Christian teachers have imparted to him (v. 6). He will hold the Galatians accountable for the instruction Paul has given them.

Mocked. Gr. *muktērizō*, “to sneer at,” “to turn up the nose at.” Those who sneer at God by treating lightly the counsel He sends must suffer the consequences of so doing.

Whatsoever. The principle here set forth is as true in the realm of spiritual things and of social relationships as in the natural world. That things shall reproduce after their kind, is an inflexible law (see on Gen. 1:12). Accordingly, an man who sows “wild oats” cannot expect an abundant wheat harvest.

8. The flesh. See on ch. 5:13, 17, 24. Paul here refers to those who do not attempt to check their carnal desires and inclinations (see ch. 5:19–21). Only as a man resists evil can he expect to be free from its influence and results. In ch. 6:7 attention is centered on the kind of seed sown, but here, more on the ground in which it is cast. Compare the parable of the Sower (see on Matt. 13:3–9). When the ground is “the flesh” the fruit is certain to be blighted.

Soweth to the Spirit. Equivalent to being “led of the Spirit” (see on Rom. 8:14; Gal. 5:16). No better example of this can be cited than the life of the apostle Paul himself. He knew by experience whereof he spoke (cf. Acts 13:1, 2; 16:6, 7; etc.).

9. Weary in well doing. That is, in following wherever the spirit leads (see on v. 8) and bearing “the fruit of the Spirit” (ch. 5:22, 23). More particularly, Christians should never weary of bearing the “burdens” of their fellow men (ch. 6:2). Such service prompted by love never becomes monotonous. Our Lord’s example in ministering to the needs of those who pressed about Him is the supreme ideal of Christian service.

In due season. That is, at the harvesttime. Although the motivating spirit in Christian service is love, rewards are promised (see Rev. 22:12). Christ illustrated the bestowal of eternal rewards by comparing it with the harvesttime (see Matt. 13:39–43). God has already specified the time for earth’s harvest (see Acts 17:31). Those who sow good seed

in the present life, seed that appears at the time to be wasted on inhospitable soil, are assured of recognition in that great day of harvest. Then every man will receive a reward, both appropriate and proportionate to his deserts (Matt. 16:27; Rev. 22:12). For comment concerning the basis on which God determines rewards see on Matt. 20:1–16.

If we faint not. Only those who endure to the end can expect to receive a reward for doing well. Too often in the Christian warfare would-be soldiers of the cross have fainted and given up the struggle. Overcome with temptation or disheartened in the way, they have turned wearily from following their Master. Paul cites the case of Demas, one of his faithful collaborators, who was attracted by the things of the world and returned to his former way of living (2 Tim. 4:10; cf. Col. 4:14). How often this experience has been repeated since Paul's day. On the other hand, what a picture of heroism is presented in the courageous attitude of the thousands of Christian martyrs who faced the cruelest of deaths rather than relinquish their steadfast confidence in the One who redeemed them from their sins.

10. Opportunity. Paul here draws a conclusion from his metaphor of sowing and reaping (vs. 7–9). There is a time for sowing, there is a time for reaping. The harvesttime is in God's hands; the sowing time, in ours. The Spirit-guided person may expect constant direction and counsel, in order that he may improve, to the maximum, the opportunities of the sowing time (v. 8). More than human wisdom is needed in order to evaluate the opportunities of time in the light of eternity, and to know how to make the most of the opportunities that present themselves. As laborers in the Master's vineyard (see on Matt. 20:1–16) we should pray for understanding to know when and how to labor most effectively. The Christian, therefore, is accountable to God, not only for serving, but also for the manner of his service.

Household of faith. That is, the church (see 1 Sam. 3:15; Eph. 2:19; 1 Peter 4:17). The church has an obligation to all men everywhere (see Matt. 28:19, 20), but first to its own members. This is true both in spiritual and in material matters. The church cannot serve the world acceptably unless its own house is in order.

11. How large a letter. Literally, "large letters." It is not clear whether Paul here refers to the entire epistle or only to vs. ch. 11–18 of 6. Most of Paul's epistles were dictated to a scribe, or amanuensis (cf. Rom. 16:22). However, some years prior to this time he began the practice of adding a brief section in his own handwriting, as a guarantee of the genuineness of his letter (see 1 Cor. 16:21; Col. 4:18). Apparently, letters had been forged in his name (see 2 Thess. 2:2; 3:17). Those who consider that Paul wrote the entire epistle without the help of an amanuensis suggest that no suitable Christian scribe was available for the task. However, it is generally conceded that the Epistle to the Roman was written at about the same time as that to the Galatians, and in writing the former Paul made use of the services of a scribe named Tertius (Rom. 16:22). The more common belief is that Paul himself penned only the closing section of Galatians. If, indeed, the entire epistle was penned by the apostle himself it would be the only one (except for Philemon) so written, and the probability is therefore against his having done so in this instance.

Paul's writing in "large letters" suggests that, at the time he wrote Galatians at least, his penmanship was faulty. Paul's great learning precludes the possibility that the apostle did not know how to write acceptably. Some have suggested that his poor penmanship was the result of defective vision (see on 2 Cor. 12:7–9; Gal. 4:15), others that his hands

had suffered more or less permanent injury from the treatment of his persecutors of (cf. 2 Cor. 11:24–27).

I have written. The form of the verb in Greek also permits the interpretative translation, “I write” or “I am writing.” Similar instances of the same verb form, in which the writer considers what he is writing at the moment from the viewpoint of those reading it, occur in Philemon 19; 1 Peter 5:12; 1 John 2:14, 21, 26. Those who believe that Paul here refers only to the postscript, use the translation “I am writing.” Those who think he refers to the entire letter render the verb, “I have written.”

12. *As many.* Paul specifies the false teachers with whose teachings he has been concerned throughout the epistle.

A fair shew. They wanted tangible, physical evidence of the success of their efforts. This could be accomplished by turning the Christians back to certain observances of the law, particularly circumcision, which had met their fulfillment in the gospel.

Lest they should suffer. This pretended zeal of the false teachers does not arise so much from genuine love for the cause they represent as from a desire to avoid persecution from their brethren, the Jews. If they express loyalty to Jewish ceremonies such as circumcision, they will not be essentially different from other Jews, and can thus avoid the persecution visited upon Paul and other Christian leaders. By this type of compromise, they were, perhaps, attempting to blend Christianity and Judaism. The remarkable success of this scheme in the churches of Galatia provides an interesting comment on the effect of religious compromise in the 1st century. Similar compromises between truth and error have been attempted since then, with more permanent results. The fear of ridicule and persecution is still responsible for compromise in teaching and in practice. The pure gospel is never popular with the majority, which is satisfied with the mere form of godliness without its power (see 2 Tim. 3:5).

13. *They.* That is, the Judaizers.

Keep the law. See on ch. 2:16. Paul means, no doubt, that they did not keep the whole law. He has already observed that one who is circumcised is under obligation to keep the whole law (see chs. 3:10; 5:3). These false apostles were neither sincere nor consistent. In fact, it would be impossible for them to observe every detail of the law scrupulously amid Gentile surroundings.

Glory in your flesh. For the Judaizers to succeed in making proselytes would be to their credit and glory in the eyes of orthodox Jews. Their objective, apparently, was to convince their devout Jewish compatriots that, as Christians, they were still good Jews, and thus ingratiate themselves with the Jewish authorities. Thus, showing their zeal for the law, they hoped to avoid persecution.

14. *God forbid.* Literally, “May it not be” A very strong affirmation.

Glory. Or, “take pride in.” Compare 2 Cor. 5:12; 11:18; 12:1; etc.

Save in the cross. Paul wrote the Corinthians that it was his purpose to make the cross supreme in his life and ministry (see 1 Cor. 2:2). In Corinthians the cross stands in contrast with “enticing words of man’s wisdom” (1 Cor. 2:4), on which he had relied somewhat at Athens. Here, the cross stands in contrast with the Jewish legal system (Gal. 6:13). He could have boasted about his Jewish background and attainments, which were far in excess of those of his opponents (2 Cor. 11:22). On the few occasions Paul mentioned his Jewish background he did so with the his apostleship, not for self-glorification. This did not mean that he was reluctant to identify himself as a Jew. Even

though he did not endorse the teachings of the Pharisees, he doubtless once considered his former attachment to this sect as a reason for confidence in the flesh (see Phil. 3:4–6; cf. Acts 23:6). Paul readily acknowledged the advantages of Judaism (see on Rom. 3:1, 2). There had been advantages in the forms of worship instituted by God in connection with the services of the sanctuary, but these were all intended to lead the worshiper to a clearer understanding of God and His requirements. Now the Galatians were being influenced to return to these forms as a means of salvation. For further comment on the “glory” of the cross see on John 3:16; Phil. 2:6–8.

The world is crucified. The “world” is here equivalent to the “flesh” of ch. 5:16–21. These have no more influence on Paul’s thinking and conduct than if they no longer existed. For comment on crucifying the “world” and the “flesh” see on ch. 5:24. See on Phil. 3:8–11.

I unto the world. See on ch. 2:20.

15. In Christ Jesus. Important textual evidence (cf. p. 10) may be cited for omitting this phrase.

Circumcision. See on Gal. 5:6; cf. 1 Cor. 7:19. Outward rites and forms are not important matters to the Christian.

A new creature. That is, a new creation, meaning either the act of creation or the being thus created. See on 2 Cor. 5:17; cf. 1 Cor. 7:19. Things of supreme consequence are thus: (1) faith, which proceeds from love, (2) the result of faith, a new man in Christ Jesus, and (3) the outward, visible evidence of this transformation, namely, obedience to God’s will as expressed in His law. No change in character results from circumcision, but a new creation brings a new person into being.

16. As many as walk. That is, as many as live according to the principle of vs. 14, 15, whether Jew or Gentile (see on chs. 3:27–29; 5:16). There are no privileged groups in the Christian church. This good news of spiritual equality had brought great joy to all Gentiles wherever Paul preached. Christian growth depends upon a knowledge of the truth and willingness to “walk” in harmony with it (see 2 Peter 3:18; see on Matt. 7:21–27).

Rule. Gr. *kanōn*, “rule,” “principle,” “law,” “standard,” “sphere of activity.” Paul here refers to the “rule,” or “standard,” of righteousness in Christ set forth in vs. 14, 15.

Peace. See on 2 Cor. 1:2; cf. Matt. 10:13.

Israel of God. That is, spiritual Israel, including both Jews and Gentiles (see Gen. 32:28; Rom. 2:28, 29; Gal. 3:7, 8). They are part of one body—the church of Jesus Christ.

17. Trouble me. Paul considers the matter settled. He has said all that he has to say on the subject in this epistle. He has no more to add. He has clearly met all the arguments of his opponents. The idea of arranging a compromise between Christianity and Judaism by combining elements of both is worth no further consideration, and he refuses to give any more time or attention to the proposal (see on vs. 12, 13).

Marks. Gr. *stigmata*, “marks” branding slaves or other property with the owner’s name or identifying symbol. Captives were sometimes so marked, and not infrequently soldiers had themselves branded with the name of their commanding officer. Temple slaves or devotees of a deity are also said to have been thus marked as evidence of their devotion. By “the marks of the Lord Jesus” Paul doubtless refers to the scars left upon his body by persecution and hardship (see 2 Cor. 4:10; 11:24–27). His opponents now insist

on compelling his Gentile converts to accept the mark of circumcision as a token of their submission to Judaism. But Paul has marks that indicate whose slave he has become, and for him there is no other loyalty than to Christ (see on Gal. 6:14). The scars Paul had received from his enemies while in the service of his Master spoke most eloquently of his devotion to Christ. Most of these scars testified to the inveterate hatred of the Jews (see on ch. 5:11).

18. Brethren. The same form of address with which Paul began the epistle (ch. 1:2). He esteems their fellowship, fully confident that they will accept his counsel (see on ch. 5:10). The fact that nothing further is heard of trouble in Galatia over the subject of Judaizing is silent testimony to the success of his present appeal to them.

Grace. See on Rom. 1:7; 3:24; 2 Cor. 13:14; cf. 2 Tim. 4:22; Philemon 25.

Throughout the epistle Paul has stressed the fact that salvation comes only through grace, that it never can be earned by works. There is no other way to be at peace with God. It is more than a passive attribute of God, it is divine love and kindness in action. Paul thus concludes his appeal to the churches of Galatia, whose members he loves and for whom he feels solicitous concern. May they turn from meaningless external ceremonies, whatever they be, and accept the redemption that comes through faith in Jesus Christ!

Your spirit. That is, you (cf. on Ps. 16:10).

Amen. See on Matt. 5:18.

The postscript following v. 18 appears in no early manuscript, and was not a part of the original, inspired record. There is general agreement that this epistle was written from Corinth during the course of Paul's Third Missionary Journey (see p. 104). Compare on Rom. 16:27; 1 Cor. 16:24; and the superscriptions to certain of the psalms (see Vol. III, p. 615).

ELLEN G. WHITE COMMENTS

- 1 COL 249; DA 440, 504; Ed 113; Ev 353; FE 279; MB 128; MH 166; ML 52; TM 274; 1T 209; 2T 52; 3T 93; 5T 247, 346, 605; 7T 263
- 1, 2 MH 495; 5T 246; 6T 398
- 2 CT 552; 1T 201; 2T 75; 3T 526; 4T 228, 5T 18
- 3 5T 247; 6T 399
- 4 2T 340
- 5 5T 247
- 7 AA 73; AH 525; CG 185; COL 85; CS 27; CT 82; Ed 108; Ev 357; FE 156, 298, 375; MB 83; MH 180, 445; MYP 21; PP 268; 1T 134, 503, 696; 2T 31, 79, 267, 300, 323, 330, 570, 641; 3T 226, 363; 4T 63, 117, 343, 363, 366, 383, 501; 5T 30, 118, 119, 320, 429, 590; 6T 268, 305, 399; 8T 52, 294; 9T 157; WM 19, 84
- 7, 8 2T 92
- 7-10 FE 250
- 8 CG 163; COL 41, 84; Ed 109; FE 227, 376; PK 624; 3T 241, 365
- 9 CG 242; EW 268; 2T 29, 445; 4T 101; 6T 305, 478; 8T 18, 196; 9T 86, 131; WM 97
- 10 MH 201; ML 232, 245; PK 652; 6T 85, 271, 278; WM 46, 210
- 14 AA 210, 561; COL 161; CT 23; DA 661; GW 29; MH 460; ML 61; 1T 525; 2T 47, 213, 443; 5T 367; 7T 31; 8T 19, 320
- 15 AA 204
- 17 SR 275

³Nichol, F. D. (1978). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary : The Holy Bible with exegetical and expository comment*. Commentary Reference Series (Ga 5:1). Washington, D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.